

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [CEQ2016](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: Agency Statements
Date: Monday, January 11, 2021 4:16:00 PM
Attachments: [CONSOLIDATION.pdf](#)
[INTERNET-FREEDOM.pdf](#)
[J1-VISAS-AND-HIRING-FOREIGN-NATIONALS.pdf](#)
[JOURNALISTIC-INDEPENDENCE.pdf](#)
[SECURITY-ISSUES.pdf](#)
[SPENDING-REVIEW.pdf](#)

Michael,

Please find attached final PDF versions of the [Agency Statements](#).

V/R,
Jonathan

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Another follow-up Media Inquiry: TRNN Correspondent Reaching Out
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 4:08:28 PM

From: Aman Azhar (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 3:44 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Public Affairs (b) (6) Public Relations (b) (6); USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6) (b) (6)
Subject: Re: TRNN Correspondent Reaching Out

Hello again:

This is a follow up to my earlier email today. I'm filing my follow up report on the latest round of administrative action by the USAGM in connection with the Biden video and the alleged security failures the CEO mentioned in one of the news releases.

In this regard, would you have an objection if I used this quote from yesterday's New York Post story and attributed to a USAGM spokesperson: "A spokesman for the USAGM told The Post: "We took action today to restore integrity to and respect for the rule of law in our work at USAGM. We will take additional steps to help return this agency to its glory days."

I'd appreciate your input and can be reached at: 202.812.1477.

Aman Azhar
The Real News

On Thu, Aug 13, 2020 at 12:57 PM Aman Azhar (b) (6) wrote:
Dear Mr. Pack / USAGM and VOA Public Affairs colleagues:

Kudos to USAGM CEO for taking hard administrative actions to put the house in order. I'm wondering if the fine public affairs folks or anyone from the USAGM can confirm the following or provide an official response for my follow up report. I'm submitting my queries below for your kind input:

1. Can you confirm that VOA Urdu Service Chief and Managing Editor Digital have been put on administrative leave / suspended for editorial negligence and violating Hatch Act?

2. How long will it take for the investigation to conclude into the matter of pro-Biden video VOA Urdu published?

3. Can you confirm that USAGM General Counsel David Kligerman, Chief Financial Officer Grant Turner and executive director Oanh Tran among others are placed on leave and stripped of their clearances?

Your input on this matter would be highly appreciated and helpful in keeping the American people informed about these important actions by CEO Michael Pack.

Many thanks,

Aman Azhar
Correspondent
The Real News
(b) (6)

On Wed, Aug 12, 2020 at 6:07 PM (b) (6) wrote:
Thank you for your email. VOA defers to our colleagues at USAGM Public Affairs whom you have copied as they are handling queries on this matter.

Regards. (b) (6)

(b) (6)
Director of Public Relations
Voice of America
US Agency for Global Media

From: Aman Azhar (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 5:56:09 PM
To: Michael Pack (b) (6); Public Affairs (b) (6)
(b) (6) Public Relations (b) (6) USAGM
Public Affairs Staff (b) (6)
Subject: TRNN Correspondent Reaching Out

Hi USAGM and VOA Public Affairs colleagues:

This is in response to the news report that has just been published at New York Post website, claiming CEO Pack's office has taken sweeping actions in response to the incident of Biden-related video and security lapses. Can you please confirm if the below actions have indeed taken place:

1. Senior Urdu Service manager (b) (6) has been put on administrative leave and might be terminated;

2. The four contractors earlier suspended are being terminated;
3. USAGM General Counsel David Kligerman, Chief Financial Officer Grant Turner and executive director Oanh Tran are among the seven placed on leave and stripped of their clearances.

Your input on this matter would be highly appreciated and helpful in keeping the American people informed about these important actions.

Many thanks,

Aman Azhar
Correspondent
The Real News

(b) (6)

On Tue, Aug 11, 2020 at 9:28 AM Aman Azhar (b) (6) wrote:
Good morning Mr. Pack and USAGM Team:

I sent below queries on August 4 and have followed up a number of times since. I've spoken with VOA public affairs as well who say USAGM is taking the lead on the matter involving suspension of VOA contractors. I'm filling my report today and writing my questions down again for your input.

- 1) Has any responsibility been fixed at the level of full time supervisory staff including service chief and the person managing social media portfolio?
- 2) Is USAGM/VOA following a policy of not renewing J-1 visas given that several contractors are awaiting renewal and noClear word is offered by the two managements?

Thanks and looking forward to hearing from your office.

My best regards,

- Aman

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Aman Azhar (b) (6)
Date: Tue, Aug 4, 2020 at 3:24 PM
Subject: TRNN Correspondent Reaching Out
To: (b) (6)
CC: (b) (6)

Dear Mr. Pack:

I hope this finds you well. I'm a correspondent for The Real News (realnews.com) and following up on the recent reports about the serious violations committed by VOA (Urdu language service) that your office is investigating. I would much appreciate if your office could bring some additional clarity to my reporting and provide responses to the following questions:

1. What measures are being taken to investigate this matter thoroughly and fix the responsibility given the seriousness of the violations including the violation of VOA charter and the Hatch Act, interference in US elections and criminal negligence of editorial oversight?
2. What safeguards are available to VOA managers to ensure that the VOA charter is followed and the US national security interests are protected?
3. There is an impression that the contractors (PSCs) with no supervisory powers are being scapegoated, whereas the supervising full time staff responsible for day-to-day editorial oversight are being protected. Can you clarify if any action has been taken against the service chief and other managing staff for instance?
4. Will the investigations determine whether the managers of the service have the required qualifications, experience and skill sets to provide leadership on matters involving national security and securing US national interests in their day-to-day programming?
5. How would your leadership ensure that such serious violations do not take place in future that can compromise US national interests by harming the reputation of the national broadcaster and exposing it to criticism from international adversaries?

While I look forward to your considered response on the above, please feel free to reach me on my direct line: (b) (6)

Thank you and I look forward to hearing what you have to say.

- Aman

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Aman Azhar
Correspondent
The Real News Network (TRNN)
Pronouns: He/Him
M: 202.812.1477
T: (b) (6)
W: therealnews.com

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Aman Azhar
Climate Change Correspondent

The Real News Network (TRNN)

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Aman Azhar

Climate Change Correspondent

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Aman Azhar

Climate Change Correspondent

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Aman Azhar

Climate Change Correspondent

The Real News Network (TRNN)

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From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: AP query
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 1:49:22 PM

Hi again Jonathan:

Thanks for sending me Mr. Pack's response to the Rubio letter last night. It came too late to write something last night but I am hoping to use it soon. In the meantime, I'm sure you have seen reports this morning about AGM not renewing visas for foreign staffers at its various broadcast outlets.

I've spoke to several people about this and none of them can confirm that this is true or that this is planned.

Can you shed some light on the situation?

Thanks!

(b) (6)

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From: (b) (6)
To: Jonathan Bronitsky
Subject: Article Link & Need Photo / Re: Two Follow-up Questions
Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 12:51:36 PM

Hi Jonathan,

Happy Monday, and I hope all is well with you.

Here is the link to the online version of the article. A 1,700 word version of this will run in Wednesday's national print edition:

https://www.theepochtimes.com/exclusive-michael-pack-discusses-restoring-americas-international-broadcasting_3439883.html

Could you please send me a high-resolution photo of Michael for the print edition article? And if it is over 10 MB, it might be a good idea to copy publisher Stephen Gregory on the email, as well, as my email server doesn't like large files; thanks in advance.

Stephen's email is (b) (6).

Thank you again for giving me the chance to talk with Michael at such length; I hope we can follow up again soon. Please give him my regards.

All the best,

(b)

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:24 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Two Follow-up Questions

Thank you so much for the follow-up, (b) (6). We're looking forward to the article.

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:43:09 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Two Follow-up Questions

Thank you for all of the additional information, Jonathan, and for your personal attention.

All the best,

(b)

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:31 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Two Follow-up Questions

Also...

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/usagm-reviewing-foreign-journalist-visas>

"VOA and other government agencies routinely scrutinize J-1 visa renewals, which are filed by the employer and submitted to the State Department.... It's unclear how the USAGM process this year differs from past practice."

From: Jonathan Bronitsky
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:06 PM
To: (b) (6)

Subject: RE: Two Follow-up Questions

<https://www.politico.com/news/2020/07/17/encryption-software-dissidents-368424>

Asked for comment, a USAGM spokesperson said: "No decision to that effect has been made. Both USAGM CEO Michael Pack and OTF Acting CEO James M. Miles are great proponents of internet firewall circumvention. They have every intention of ensuring that these important projects continue to be funded."

<https://time.com/5860163/trump-hong-kong-funding-freeze/>

In a statement to TIME, the USAGM did not dispute the \$2 million figure, but said that it was committed to defending Internet freedom in the region. "USAGM CEO Michael Pack understands the scale and nature of the threat posed by opponents of freedom of expression, and that is precisely why he considers bolstering [Chinese] firewall circumvention a top priority of his tenure at the agency," a spokesperson said.

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:22 PM

To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)

Subject: Two Follow-up Questions

Hi Jonathan,

We are getting ready to publish the article, but before we put it up (and then put it in next week's national print edition), I'd like to get Michael's input on one issue that I didn't raise during the interview, and one that I did raise but on which I would like clarification.

First, you may remember that Michael talked about the heroes of the language services, those who face, and whose families face, intimidation, harassment, and even worse in their home countries. Of course, what has just happened to Masih Alinejad's brother in Iran is a prime - and tragic - example of that.

Critics of Michael, however, may point to the 100 journalists whose visas are not being renewed and say that if he feels such journalists are heroes, then why are they being put into a position where they will likely face a nasty and dangerous homecoming? Below please find the Washington Post article on that subject. I would greatly appreciate Michael's response to the criticism that he is potentially exposing USAGM journalists to mistreatment in their home countries, as I have written a section on his comments about the international journalists being heroes, and I want him to have the chance to answer critics who might challenge that position.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/media/voice-of-america-faces-loss-of-international-journalists-as-new-overseer-lets-visas-expire/2020/07/09/42f09844-c192-11ea-b4f6-cb39cd8940fb_story.html

Second, you may remember that we had a discussion on Internet firewall circumnavigation tools. Most of that conversation was off the record. I would like to know what I *can* say in that regard. Reports say that the money that has been put into those tools - \$100 million over nearly a decade (according to RealClearPolitics, https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2020/06/26/as_critics_rage_pack_aims_to_pierce_chinas_info_firewall_143556.html) - has been ineffective, especially in China.

Can Michael comment for the record on what his approach will now be? I want to make sure that I clearly separate what he authorized to be on the record from what we discussed that was off the record.

For your reference, here are links to some information I found on both circumnavigation tools, as well as an interesting blog thread on shortwave in China, which gets somewhat political, on both sides. But there are also objective points which you may find interesting:

1) Circumvention Tools: https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/Archived_Special_Report_FH_Censorship_Circumvention_tools.pdf

2) Shortwave in China: <https://mountainrunner.us/2019/08/shortwave/>

Thank you very much in advance for your help, Jonathan! And please thank Michael again for me, as well. He was a pleasure to interview, and I hope that we may all stay in touch.

Kind regards.

(b) (6)

For The Epoch Times

(b) (6)

U.S. Mobile: (b) (6)

From: [Thad Strom](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Diane Cullo](#)
Subject: article
Date: Tuesday, October 6, 2020 3:05:22 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Draft and Pre-decisional

Interesting article when considered in context of J-1 visa issues at USAGM.

<https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/519811-trump-administration-to-impose-new-rules-targeting-h-1b-visas>

Thad Strom
Senior Advisor
U.S. Agency for Global Media

w) (b) (6)
c) (b) (6)



From: (b) (6)
To: Matthew Walsh; Oanh Tran; Marie Lennon; David Kligerman;
Grant Turner; Terry Balazs; Shawn Powers; (b) (6);
(b) (6); Jeffrey Shapiro; (b) (6);
(b) (6); Lillian Cheng; (b) (6);
(b) (6); Gary Thatcher; (b) (6);
(b) (6); Public Relations; (b) (6); James Reeves; (b) (6);
(b) (6); Keli Chao; Diane Cullio; Emily Pauline Newman; Daniel Hanlon; Logan B. McVey; Jonathan
Bronitsky; Michael B. Williams; Andre Mendes; (b) (6); Elez Biberaj; VOA Division
Directors; (b) (6); USAGM Public Affairs Staff; (b) (6)
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:12:49 AM

[via Google Translate]

United States

[Exclusive: Michael Pack on restoring U.S. international broadcasting](#)

BY BONNIE EVANS

The Epoch Times, July 27, 2020 Updated: July 27, 2020

[Michael Pack](#) is a man on a mission.

He is now the head of the U.S. Global Media Agency, which has 4000 employees and oversees organizations such as [Voice of America](#) and Radio Free Asia. Pack has proposed, and his agency, to restore the original mission of American public diplomacy through international broadcasting.

"All stations... are committed by law to presenting fair, objective and balanced news, ... and I want them to stick to it," Pack said.

VOA, in particular, has been criticized in recent years for giving in to pressure from countries such as China and Iran in presenting the position of their regimes rather than the views of the United States.

By contrast, "balance means reflecting the range of opinions in the United States," Pack said.

"When VOA covers elections or covers the pandemic or covers demonstrations, or Black Lives Matters riots, they need to cover them in a way that reflects a variety of U.S. opinions," he said.

"It's a hard thing to achieve. in a polarized world," Pack admitted, but "these stations are legally and morally required" to ensure that their broadcasts reflect American views.

VOA's guiding principles emphasize the requirements of "representing america" and "presenting U.S. policies clearly and effectively."

In defense of American ideas and institutions

In an extensive interview with The Epoch Times, Pack also spoke of allegations that Voice of America has been influenced by the Chinese Communist Party (PCC), criticism of him for being appointed by President Trump, on his way to the highest post of American public broadcasting, and who his true heroes are.

But the key to its administration of the agency, which broadcasts to 100 countries in 62 languages, and boasts of having 350 million listeners worldwide, is "the overall goal of the entire agency."

"American taxpayers spend \$800 million a year" at USAGM, Pack said.

The agency must "advance america's broad foreign policy objectives. That includes fighting for American ideas and institutions against... China and Iran's views," Pack said.

"We need... defend American values, not Democratic or Republican values, but American values like democracy and human rights," Pack continued.

Broadcasters also need to "explain our system," particularly at a time when regimes like China's are doing a very good job of promoting" the Chinese system, Pack said.

"We need to face that challenge," he said.

Pack referred to demonstrations in Beijing in the spring of 1989 that led to a massacre of civilians in and around Tiananmen Square by the People's Liberation Army on June 4 of that year.

"Tiananmen Square is a case in which a lot of people were inspired by the American system," Pack said, so much so that the protesters erected "a Statue of Liberty," Pack said.

"American ideals have inspired the world since the country was founded. And rightly so. We must remain that beacon of freedom around the world and the agency is really part of that. So that's my overall goal."

"Your mission is different from a commercial station, so you know it, everyone knows that."

However, Pack added, "Obviously, there are some bad actors that need to be put aside."

Countering the influence of the Chinese Communist Party

The Hoover Institution, in an October 2018 report on Chinese influence in the United States, highlighted Voice of America as a media organization that has been under the influence of the PCC since the early 2000s. The report details the collaboration of the Mandarin Chinese

Voice of America service with the Chinese embassy in Washington, suggesting that there was an intimate relationship between the voice's Mandarin Chinese service staff and embassy officials.

The report also states that employees of the Voice of America Mandarin service have allowed the Chinese embassy to "express their opinions on the content of VOA."

Pack reiterated the position he set out at his confirmation hearing.

"I'm going to examine all these accusations, " said Pack.

"I am very concerned about these accusations about the VoA Mandarin service and... I'm totally committed to getting to the bottom of this... I'm shocked and horrified," he added.

However, the PCCh's influence on broadcasting aimed at its citizens does not stop at its attempts to influence the broadcasters themselves.

It extends to draconian control over Internet access in China.

"China's Internet firewall is like the Berlin Wall: it has to fall," Pack said.

China's firewall effectively cuts off access to the world outside China, giving the Chinese Communist Party virtually complete control and access to all web traffic available within Chinese borders.

Part of USAGM's mission is to bypass that firewall so that Chinese citizens have the unlimited ability to listen to Voice of America and Asian Free Radio broadcasts.

That's easier said than done, with the controversy over what the best approach is.

The Open Technology Fund (OTF), a non-profit organization that receives its funding through USAGM, is responsible for developing Internet evasion technologies. It insists on open source applications, including Signal and Tor.

But critics say the OTF has been ineffective in breaking China's firewall.

The Lantos Foundation for Justice and Human Rights complains in an article on 23 June on its website that the OTF has had "a lack of follow-up in support of some of the most effective evasion tools available today".

In the search for effective tools, the Lantos Foundation urges the use of "both open source

and closed source technologies". Lantos Swett, the president of the Lantos Foundation, has urged funding the Freegate, Lantern, Psiphon and Ultrasurf programs.

The pack itself, without specifying a particular preference, said it is open to considering the best firewall evasion strategies available.

That could include short-wave transmission, a technology that has seen a sharp decline in its use with the ubiquitous rise of the Internet.

But, "we have a short-wave infrastructure that the United States has already invested in," Pack said.

"We have the infrastructure, we have the towers, we have the knowledge base."

"The short wave can be a powerful tool. With the short wave you can transmit over long distances without the support of the host country, so the short wave has some real advantages," he added.

"I think it would be a mistake to give it up. On the other hand, young people, especially... are beyond the short wave, so it varies, but I'm certainly going to investigate it."

"Heroes" in Voice of America

When asked about the intimidation that some VOA journalists and their families face in their home countries, such as China and Iran, Pack said that "the courage of many of these journalists is very impressive," adding that there were VOA journalists or their families who were imprisoned.

"That makes them, in my view, heroes," Pack continued.

The examples are as recent as July 15, when Voice of America reported that an eight-year prison sentence "was handed over by the Islamic Republic of Iran to Alireza Alinejad, the brother of Masih Alinejad, the host of the popular Tablet program on the Persian television channel VOA."

The report went on to say that the sentencing represents "Iran's continued efforts to silence journalists who report on the truth by punishing their relatives."

Pack said "I think it's my responsibility" to help journalists who face the "horrible process" their regimes inflict on them, referring to the self-censorship that many journalists from repressive regimes feel they must practice to keep both their families and themselves safe.

"Those who are in our language services really within the country, and those who have fled communist China or their families have fled, understand it in a deeper, deeper way than I understand it myself, I would have to say," Pack said, referring to the depth of repression and the danger of imprisonment that those who do not self-censorship.

"They want [us] to return to the true mission of [VOA]. There's something fundamental there that I think will allow us to progress," Pack concluded.

Pack was recently criticized for reports that the agency cannot renew the visas of 100 of its foreign journalists, forcing them to return to their home countries whose regimes can punish them for their journalistic work in the United States.

A spokesman for the agency told The Epoch Times, however, that "this is not out of the ordinary, visas are reviewed,... this is a regular process."

VoA itself reported that "VOA and other government agencies routinely review the renewals of the J-1 visa, which are submitted by the employer and submitted to the State Department... It is unclear how the USAGM process differs this year from previous practice."

Road to USAGM

Pack's beginnings do not suggest an obvious career in conservative cinema or the role of America's international broadcasting general director he has today.

"I grew up in up west New York City. My parents were liberal Jews. I assumed the policy of everyone around me was correct," Pack said.

After attending college at Yale and then Berkeley, Pack attended film school for a semester at New York University.

That's when his perspective began to change, Pack said.

"All my colleagues were making these radical movies," Pack recalls.

"His films were... anti-American, anti-capitalists, very critical of the United States and its history and role in the world," Pack continued.

The 1970s and 1980s saw an avalanche of documentary films portraying the U.S. in general decline, and criticizing the U.S. role in Vietnam and Latin America. These films include 1982's "The Killing of America," 1974's "Hearts and Minds," and 1982's "When the Mountains Shake," 1982.

"I thought everything they did was wrong," Pack said.

Upon leaving film school, Pack teamed up with a friend and founded Manifold Productions.

"The idea was to counter these anti-American and anti-Capitalist films."

"At 20 I felt strongly that it wouldn't take long," Pack said.

"I felt that defending American business and capitalism" was easier than making movies that attacked America, Pack continued.

He also believed that taking a pro-American stance would give the company much greater access to "resources, funds and people" than its opposition on the left.

"So my partner and I naively thought we would bring down the opposition in a matter of years," Pack recalls. But, he continued, "now, you know, it's been many decades."

Today, however, "There is hardly anyone on my side of the world of documentary film."

Pack's film company produced films such as "Hollywood vs. Hollywood. Religion," "Inside the Republican Revolution," "Rediscovering George Washington," "The Fall of Newt Gingrich" and "The Rodney King Incident."

"We were a small group that thought, well, our group is right, because we speak for America." Ronald Reagan's election seemed to suggest that he and his colleagues were on the right track, Pack said.

"But in the world of documentaries and in the media in general that didn't happen."

Pack responds to his critics

Asked about criticism that he will be a Trump administration spokesman and a tool for Trump's re-election campaign, Pack said, "Well, I'm a Trump political appointment. I have a three-year term," adding that if Biden wins in the next election, "then that person will be a politically appointed Democrat. That's what happens in politics."

Noting that there are people "who want to accuse me of trying to turn this agency into Trump TV," Pack said that the power of USAGM and its broadcasters lies in its independence as a "fair source of news and information."

"I would never want to destroy that," Pack declared.

"Bringing him back to his mission is hard enough," Pack said.

But then, as critics have suggested, "transform it, get all these journalists, who after all don't sympathize as much with Trump... writing on Trump's line would be almost impossible, it would be a superhuman task," he added.

"So, " said Pack, "I don't want to do it, " and if I did"I could never get away with it; the media would expose it as soon as it took a turn in that direction."

"So I feel like it's kind of a way to attack me, but it has no plausibility," Pack concluded.

Unbiased perspective

Pack said he took the job because he supports an impartial perspective.

"The law requires these stations not to be biased either for or against Trump," he said.

"It's been a great struggle, I mean I had a long and arduous confirmation process," Pack said.

In fact, Pack's confirmation came only after more than two years have passed since his nomination.

"It took a long time, and if I wasn't committed to the mission, I wouldn't have been through all that."

When asked if he had considered removing his name, Pack answered in the affirmative.

"Well, you know, yes, I considered removing my name periodically, I considered it, but I felt it was worth it. Felt... that this is an opportunity to do something that I think is of historical importance to the American people and to the world. You don't get that opportunity too much in life, at least I don't," he added.

"I think it's really... more important than ever to have these organizations. We are in another generational battle with other ideas... It's important to fight for the American view of the world," Pack said.

The agency, he said, "is supported by both political parties," adding that its goal is to return it to its original mission.

"I hope that in the end, people will recognize that that's what I'm doing, including my critics. I hope the test is in the actions, and that they will recognize those actions."

"I will clearly put this agency on a path that everyone recognizes. it's in America's interest."

[Voice Of America Promoted A Pro-Biden Muslim Political Campaign Ad, Then Removed It](#)

Sara Carter

The Sara Carter Show, Jul 27, 2020

This story is developing and will be updated.

About saracarter.com - <https://saraacarter.com/about/>

[The Open Technology Fund's vital role for democracy worldwide should not be undermined](#)

Abigail Phillips

Mozilla, July 27, 2020

The Open Technology Fund plays a vital role for democracy worldwide. That's why Mozilla on Friday joined a [friend of the court brief](#) in support of the Open Technology Fund's independence from government control as OTF's case moves forward to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Related:

Center for Democracy & Technology - <https://cdt.org/insights/cdt-joins-eff-others-in-amicus-brief-in-otf-v-pack/>

The Well News - <https://www.thewellnews.com/trump-officials-accused-of-intimidating-advocacy-group-for-internet-freedom/>

[What McConnell is getting very wrong on the stimulus bill](#)

Opinion by Tina Smith

CNN, Updated 6:14 AM ET, Tue July 28, 2020

Editor's Note: *Sen. Tina Smith is a Democrat from Minnesota. The opinions expressed in this commentary are those of the author. Read [more opinion](#) on CNN.*

As Senate majority leader, did he think these 10 weeks could be used to develop a plan among members of his own party, not to mention us Democrats, who stand ready to work? Did he ever think maybe there was more pressing business than [confirming positions](#) like the **CEO of the US Agency for Global Media**, which oversees news organizations like Voice of America?

OF INTEREST:

[PDC Sponsored and Co-Sponsored Events](#)

First Monday Forum

August 3, 2020

12:00 pm – 1:15 pm

Diplomacy in Blue: Willis Conover and the international impact of

jazz featuring **Geoffrey Cowan**, USC University Professor and former Director of the Voice of America.

For millions of people around the world, **Willis Conover was truly the Voice of America**. From Cape Town to Leningrad and Beijing, and especially in Eastern Europe, Conover's broadcasts carried the sound of jazz, of America – and of freedom. His interviews and musical selections were heard and revered around the world.

To mark and celebrate Conover's centennial, the First Monday discussion on August 3 will be devoted to a discussion of Willis Conover, his enduring legacy, and the role of music diplomacy.

To register for this event, please [click here](#).

From: (b) (6)
To: [USAGM Media Clips](#)
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Wednesday, October 28, 2020 9:33:51 AM

[PEN AMERICA REJECTS PROPOSED DHS VISA CHANGES FOR FOREIGN NATIONALS](#)

Proposed rule change would limit ability for journalists, students to live and work in the U.S.

PEN AMERICA

October 27, 2020

[Pushback as Trump appointee tries to control VOA](#)

AFP

October 27, 2020

[Trump appointee sparks bipartisan furor for politicizing media agency](#)

The Hill

October 27, 2020

Laura Kelly

[Trump Appointee Rescinds Rule Shielding Government News Outlets From Federal Tampering](#)

The action comes amid concern that Michael Pack is turning outlets under his purview, including Voice of America, into a pro-Trump public relations arm.

New York Times

October 27, 2020 Updated October 28, 2020

Pranshu Verma

[Trump aims to warp the Voice of America into a propaganda tool](#)

The Washington Post

October 27, 2020

Editorial Board

[Trump appointee sweeps aside rule that ensured 'firewall' at Voice of America](#)

Washington Post

October 27, 2020

Paul Farhi

[USAGM CEO Criticized Over Move to Rescind Firewall Regulation](#)

VOA News

October 27, 2020

Jessica Jerreat

[Global Media Agency CEO Revokes Regulation Clarifying 'Firewall' Protecting Journalistic Integrity](#)

The move is at most symbolic and a "weird Hail Mary" days ahead of the presidential election, said a whistleblower attorney.

Government Executive

October 27, 2020

Courtney Buble

[Right-wing misinformation machine could gain steam post-election](#)

AXIOS

October 28, 2020

Sara Fischer

[Trump-appointed USAGM CEO removes agency's firewall protections](#)

AXIOS

October 27, 2020

Sara Fischer

[Fears of crackdown on US journalism as Trump ally removes editorial 'firewall'](#)

Outrage as USAGM chief Michael Pack rescinds rule that insulates journalists from editorial direction of politically appointed bosses

The Guardian

October 27, 2020

[POLITICO Playbook PM: McConnell on Covid relief: I'm not sure they ever got close](#)

Politico

October 27, 2020

By ANNA PALMER, JAKE SHERMAN, ELI OKUN and GARRETT ROSS

[Trump-Picked VOA Boss Eliminates 'Firewall' Between Journalists And Political Management](#)

Talking Points Memo

October 27, 2020

Matt Shuham

[Tuesday's Mini-Report, 10.27.20](#)

MSNBC

October 27, 2020

Steve Benen

[Trump Appointee Seeks to Turn U.S. Media Agency Into a Political Cheerleader – Thebritishjournal Reports](#)

The British Journal

October 27, 2020

[Menendez Statement on Michael Pack's Latest Attack on USAGM](#)

insidenj.com

October 27, 2020

[Head of USAGM removes firewall regulation aimed to protect editorial independence](#)

Committee to Protect Journalists

October 27, 2020

[Reporters Committee statement on editorial 'firewall' removal at US Agency for Global Media](#)

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

October 27, 2020

[AFSA Statement on the Politicization of the U.S. Agency for Global Media](#)

AFSA

October 27, 2020

From: (b) (6)
To: (b) (6); Matthew Walsh; Oanh Tran; Marie Lennon; David Kligerman; Grant Turner; Terry Balazs; Shawn Powers; (b) (6); Jeffrey Shapiro; (b) (6); (b) (6); Lillian Cheng; (b) (6); (b) (6); Gary Thatcher; (b) (6); (b) (6); Public Relations; (b) (6); James Reeves; (b) (6); (b) (6); Kelu Chao; Diane Cullio; Emily Pauline Newman; Daniel Hanlon; Logan B. McVey; Jonathan Bronitsky; Michael B. Williams; Andre Mendes; (b) (6); Elez Biberaj; VOA Division Directors; (b) (6); USAGM Public Affairs Staff; (b) (6)
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 11:09:47 AM

Press Freedom

[Temporary Visa Reprieve for VOA Thai Journalist](#)

VOA News, By Jessica Jerreat

July 24, 2020 08:30 PM

WASHINGTON - Within 24 hours, Thai journalist Warangkana Chomchuen went from arranging virtual farewells with friends and colleagues and finalizing plans to leave the U.S. with her wife and cat, to hearing she could continue working in the U.S. for at least 30 days.

In a last-minute reprieve, the State Department stepped in and granted a special extension to Chomchuen's J-1 visa that means the VOA Thai service journalist can return to work until August 23, while waiting to hear if the United States Agency for Global Media will approve her renewal application.

The reprieve gives temporary relief to Chomchuen, who worked for NBC News and The Wall Street Journal before leaving Bangkok to join VOA last year. But questions remain about the status of the review of J-1 visas – the entry permit for individuals with unique skills – that USAGM management announced earlier this month.

[VOA visa decision could hobble Venezuela coverage](#)

THE HILL, BY RAFAEL BERNAL - 07/24/20 08:09 PM EDT 31

USA

[USAGM Announces Investigation Into 'Long-term Security Failures'](#)

By VOA News, July 24, 2020 09:46 PM

Office of Management and Budget

Statements of Administration Policy

Statement of Administration Policy on July 23, 2020

[H.R. 7608 – State, Foreign Operations, Agriculture, Rural Development, Interior, Environment,](#)

[Military Construction, and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2021](#)[Statement of Administration Policy on July 21, 2020](#)

U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM). The Administration strongly opposes language under the International Broadcasting Operations heading in title I of the bill, which requires use of USAGM funds to implement a definition contained in section 531 of title 22, Code of Federal Regulations, regarding the statutory firewall contained within the United States International Broadcasting Act of 1994, as amended. This language is unnecessary and redundant, as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of USAGM leads the Agency's journalistic standards policies and is responsible for managing United States international broadcasting. While the ostensible purpose of the language and the regulation it refers to is the protection of journalistic integrity, its practical effect is to preclude the CEO from exercising the authorities provided to the leadership position with strong bipartisan support in 2017. The President has been clear in his support for the Agency, its leader, and the needed reforms to ensure that it carries out USAGM's mission to inform and engage world audiences and Voice of America's mission to represent the United States, its people, and its policies worldwide and to be a reliable and authoritative source of news.

[This Week in Technology + Press Freedom: July 26, 2020](#)

POLICY

By **REPORTERS COMMITTEE FOR FREEDOM OF THE PRESS**, Posted on July 27, 2020

The **U.S. Open Technology Fund**, a government-backed digital rights nonprofit, is [expected to cancel a contract](#) for encryption software that helps residents of repressive countries access U.S. government-funded news sources. OTF usually spends about \$2 million annually for the software, which allows people in countries like Iran to access Voice of America and Radio Free Europe. OTF receives funding from the U.S. Agency for Global Media, which has recently been the focus of concerns about [editorial independence](#) — among other controversies. On July 21, a federal appeals court [issued an emergency injunction](#) blocking the removal of OTF board members.

Related:

Access Now - <https://www.accessnow.org/access-now-joins-amicus-brief-in-defense-of-otf/>
[On the Left: Pity the USA](#)

By Jack Batson

Daily Republic, July 27, 2020

...

Jack Batson is a former member of the Fairfield City Council. Reach him by email at jbatson@prodigy.net.

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POLITICO

[Weekly Cybersecurity](#)

Delivered every Monday by 10 a.m., Weekly Cybersecurity examines the latest news in cybersecurity policy and politics.

By TIM STARKS 07/27/2020 10:00 AM EDT

QUICK BYTES

— **Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty:** [The EU is looking to impose sanctions](#) on China, North Korea and Russia over cyberattacks.

From: (b) (6)
To: [USAGM Media Clips](#)
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 9:25:14 AM

[MENENDEZ, ENGEL LEAD DEMS IN CALLING ON USAGM TO RENEW FOREIGN NATIONAL JOURNALIST VISA EXTENSIONS](#)

US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
September 14, 2020

[EUROPEAN ORGANISATIONS URGE US CONGRESS TO PROTECT NONPARTISAN, INDEPENDENT NATURE OF US AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA](#)

Defend Democracy
September 11, 2020

[Giving an uncensored musical voice to victims of the Chinese Communist Party](#)

The CCP's human rights violations must be thwarted

Washington Times
September 14, 2020
Kyle Obert

[The Dragon Rises](#)

In order to head off a potential conflict with China, the U.S. should refocus military and soft-power efforts to contain a resurgent Middle Kingdom.

The Bulwark
September 15, 2020
Shay Khatiri

[Researchers Targeting AI Bias, Sex Worker Advocate, and Global Internet Freedom Community Honored at EFF's Pioneer Award Ceremony](#)

Virtual Ceremony October 15 to Honor Joy Buolamwini, Dr. Timnit Gebru, and Deborah Raji; Danielle Blunt; and the Open Technology Fund (OTF) Community

Electronic Frontier Foundation
September 14, 2020

[TikTok picks Oracle as US partner, rejects Microsoft proposal: Reports](#)

The Voice of America journalist Steve Herman quoted China's state-run news channel CGTN as saying that there will be no sale of TikTok to Oracle or Microsoft.

Scroll.in

September 14, 2020

[Questions Raised in Guyana About Pompeo's "Real" Reason for Visiting](#)

Caribbean National Weekly

September 14, 2020

[New cases against Pakistani journalists stoke media crackdown concerns days after PM boasts of free press](#)

Since Imran Khan became prime minister, the military's influence on the government has grown as has the administration's aversion to criticism, advocates and Pakistani reporters say.

Internation Consortium of Investigative Journalists

September 14, 2020

Scilla Alecci

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To: Oanh Tran; Marie Lennon; David Kligerman;
Grant Turner; Terry Balazs; Shawn Powers; (b) (6); Jeffrey Shapiro; (b) (6);
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(b) (6); Public Relations; (b) (6); James Reeves; (b) (6);
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Bronitsky; Michael B. Williams; Andre Mendes; (b) (6); Elez Biberaj; VOA Division
Directors
Cc: USAGM Public Affairs Staff
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 10:51:21 AM

[Fixing Uncle Sam's global broadcasting arm is more important than ever](#)

NEW YORK POST, By Michael Pack

July 8, 2020 | 11:22am | Updated

[U.S. Broadcasting Agency Will Not Extend Visas For Its Foreign Journalists](#)

NPR, WAMU 88.5 David Folkenflik, Mark Katkov, July 9, 2020

Dozens of foreign nationals working as journalists in the U.S. for Voice of America, the federal government's international broadcaster, will not have their visas extended once they expire, according to three people with knowledge of the decision.

Those with knowledge of the decision say the new CEO of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, Michael Pack, signaled he will not approve the visa extensions. Also Wednesday, according to those with knowledge of the decision, Pack ordered the dismissal of former Radio Free Asia chief Bay Fang, whom Pack had previously demoted. The sources asked not to be identified because of a fear of retaliation.

[Media](#)

[Voice of America faces loss of international journalists as new overseer lets visas expire](#)

By [Paul Farhi](#)

Washington Post, July 9, 2020 at 10:32 AM EDT

Voice of America, the government-funded international broadcaster, could be facing the loss of many of its international journalists under a new overseer appointed by President Trump.

The new boss, [Michael Pack](#), has so far ignored calls by VOA managers to extend visas held by foreign-born journalists who work at the news agency. This has set off alarms among

employees who fear that dozens of employees could lose their jobs, threatening production of VOA's many non-English language programs and newscasts.

About 100 Voice of America news employees are not American citizens; they work for the agency in Washington under visas that must be regularly extended or renewed. The journalists are foreign nationals who report stories and produce news reports in many of the 47 languages that Voice of America transmits, such as Mandarin, Farsi and Amharic.

With a fresh round of visas expiring this month, Pack — who heads VOA's parent organization, the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) — has declined to approve renewals, leaving some employees facing the prospect of returning to their home countries — a daunting prospect given that their reporting has sometimes angered authoritarian governments.

Pack hasn't communicated his intentions, despite pleas from VOA, people at VOA said.

The visas, known as J1s, are among several kinds temporarily banned by Trump in response to the coronavirus pandemic. But Trump's [presidential proclamation](#) bans new visas for six months; it's unclear if it affects renewals of existing ones.

Pack took over the agency last month after a long and bruising nomination battle in the Senate. Many Democrats, and a handful of Republicans, opposed Pack, Trump's choice to head the bureaucracy that oversees VOA and other government-funded international broadcast entities, such as Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Asia.

[How Trump's obsessions with media and loyalty coalesced in a battle for Voice of America](#)

In lobbying for Pack's confirmation, Trump and the White House portrayed Voice of America as an out-of-control news organization [that has distributed "propaganda"](#) favorable to regimes in China and Iran — a claim vigorously disputed by VOA.

Within days of taking office, Pack stunned five of the media agencies under his control by firing their top officials via a brief email sent after business hours. VOA's director and deputy director likely would have been dismissed as well, but [they resigned two days before](#) the purge. Pack hasn't explained his actions.

A VOA spokesman referred questions to officials at USAGM, who didn't return requests for comment.

VOA has used foreign nationals in its newsroom for decades, and expends considerable time and effort to recruit them. The individuals are experienced broadcasters and digital

journalists; they are also bi-lingual and are versed in the culture and history of the countries they cover for VOA.

The journalists' J1 visas enable them to work in the U.S. for a period up to several years. People at VOA said renewals have been routine in the past, in part because the journalists have specialized skills that can't be easily replaced by American citizens.

"We've never had a problem with extending [the visas]," said one VOA manager, who spoke on condition of anonymity because she wasn't authorized to speak for the agency. "It's going to be really difficult to function without them."

The VOA has utilized J1 visas in the past, for example, to assemble its Somali language news service. It recruited former Somali broadcasters who had fled to Canada and the United Kingdom from the war-torn African nation.

The J1 visa of a Thai journalist who has been working at the VOA since last year expired on July 1, and USAGM hasn't responded to requests to approve a renewal, the manager said. The journalist, one of four in VOA's Thai service, is a Fulbright Scholar and has worked for other American news organizations.

"These are people you don't just walk down the street and bump into" if you have to replace them, the manager said.

[CPJ sends letter to U.S. Agency for Global Media head encouraging unbiased coverage](#)

CPJ, July 8, 2020 4:16 PM EDT

NR PLUS

Magazine July 27, 2020, Issue

[The Week](#)

By NR Editors

National Review, July 9, 2020 9:54 AM • The "radios" are jewels in the American crown, doing much good at relatively little expense. These include Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty (which are combined); the Middle East Broadcasting Networks; and Radio Free Asia. Michael Pack has now assumed control of the U.S. Agency for Global Media. He immediately broomed the heads of the radios, as is his prerogative. The broomees include Trump appointees: Jamie Fly at RFE/RL and Alberto Fernandez at MBN. Fernandez is an interesting case: A Cuban American, he became a top Arabist in the Foreign Service, and can argue with the best of

them on Arab television. The work of our radios is mainly unsung. Millions of people around the world rely on the radios, as they are unable to obtain trustworthy news in their own countries. May the new leaders be as good as the old.

Pompeo hints at Iran links in killing of Hashemi

[US Secretary of State said Iraqi expert 'was repeatedly threatened by Iran-backed armed groups'.](#)

The Arab Weekly, Thursday 09/07/2020

But Iraqi activist Ghaith al-Tamimi **told US-based Alhurra network** that Hashemi had received death threats from the pro-Iranian hardline faction Kata'ib Hezbollah

Alhurra in the Arab Press 7-8

Alhurra reported that a Muslim mother was attacked in front her children in a public park in Russia's Republic of Tatarstan. Cited by [Ashorouk](#).

[Radio Sawt Beirut International](#) cited **Alhurra.com** for an article about the crimes committed by Iran proxies and Hezbollah in Lebanon and Iraq.

[24 AE](#) cited a story **Alhurra.com** published about Syrian families in Turkey marrying off underage daughters to Turkish men due to poverty.

[Akhbar al-Iraq](#) referred to the interview that Hisham al-Hashemi did with **Alhurra** before he was killed in Baghdad.

[Quds Press](#) cited statements aired on **Alhurra** from U.S. Senator Robert Menendez on the withdrawal of the U.S. from the World Health Organization.

[Middle East Online](#) cited **Alhurra** for its story on the killing of Iraqi security expert Hisham al-Hashemi.

Mary J. Zoorob

Communications Manager

Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Inc.

From: (b) (6)
To: Oanh Tran; Marie Lennon; David Kligerman;
Grant Turner; Terry Balazs; Shawn Powers; (b) (6); Jeffrey Shapiro; (b) (6);
(b) (6); Lillian Cheng; (b) (6); Gary Thatcher; (b) (6);
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Bronitsky; Michael B. Williams; Andre Mendes; (b) (6); Elez Biberaj; VOA
Division Directors
Cc: USAGM Public Affairs Staff
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 10:35:54 AM

Press Release

[USAGM CEO Michael Pack thanks interim heads of agency's five broadcasting networks](#)

USAGM.gov, June 30, 2020

Related:

All Access - <https://www.allaccess.com/net-news/archive/story/197864/u-s-agency-for-global-media-names-interim-heads-of>

Axios - [Federal media agency announces new interim heads after firings by Trump appointee](#)

USA

[US Global Media Agency Names Longtime VOA Journalist as Acting Director](#)

By **VOA News**

June 30, 2020 02:59 PM

Related:

Albanian Daily News - <https://www.albaniandailynews.com/index.php?idm=43834&mod=2>

[Changes at the Top for Radio Free Europe & Other Overseas Outlets](#)

Tri States Public Radio, By Rich Egger • June 30, 2020

Related:

Public Diplomacy Council - <https://www.publicdiplomacycouncil.org/2020/06/27/americas-overseas-broadcasting-credibility-at-risk/>

Defense One - <https://www.defenseone.com/technology/2020/07/how-biden-will-wage-great-power-competition/166570/?oref=d-river>

Opinion

NiemanReports, June 29, 2020

[Changes at VOA Threaten the Free Press — At Home and Abroad](#)

Political bias would discredit U.S. global news services, undermining press freedom and democracy

Related: [Tweet](#) by Freedom House President Michael Abramowitz

Some of the best reporting on important international issues is endangered by recent changes at

@VOANews and other US media agencies. My take at @freedomhouse for @NiemanReports

Press Release

[Voice of America Broadcasters Win Top 10 D.C. Awards](#)

insidevoa.com, June 30, 2020

government

[Internet freedom activists are concerned a Trump appointee could threaten pro-democracy work abroad](#)

Written by Jeff Stone

Jun 30, 2020 | **CYBERSCOOP**

[Tajikistan parliament approves amendments imposing fines, detentions for ‘false news’ amid COVID-19 pandemic](#)

CPJ, June 30, 2020 11:44 AM EDT

New York, June 30, 2020 – Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon should not ratify proposed legal amendments that would threaten free expression in the country, the Committee to Protect Journalists said today.

...

Individuals convicted under the proposed measures could be fined 580 to 1,160 somoni (\$56-112), and legal entities such as news outlets could be fined 8,700-11,600 somoni (\$844-1,124), according to [External linka reportExternal link](#) by the Tajik-language service of the U.S. Congress-funded broadcaster **Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty**.

[Independent media advocate and journalist tell of challenges covering Belarus’s upcoming elections and coronavirus](#)

CPJ, By Valentinas Mite/CPJ Russia and Belarus Correspondent on June 29, 2020 5:03 PM EDT

Amid these developments, CPJ spoke about press freedom in Belarus via phone with Barys

Haretski, the deputy head of BAJ, and **Yury Drakakhrust, a Prague-based correspondent for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty**, which is funded by the U.S. Congress. Drakakhrust often visits Belarus and writes stories for Belarusian independent media. Their answers have been edited for length and clarity.

What is the overall state of the media in Belarus today?

Drakakhrust: The main problem is that the state monopolizes the information...

News

[Belarus prosecutors warn web critics of criminal sanctions](#)

BELSAT, 2020.06.29 15:12

The law enforcement agencies have been receiving more and complaints of defamation and insults on the Internet, Pavel Yelisseyeu, a representative of the Prosecutor General's Office, said on Monday.

Last Thursday, Belarusian Interior Minister **Yury Karayeu** [faulted](#) Telegram channels and even **Radio Free Europe** for 'coordinating protests' in Belarus over their covering [pickets and rallies](#). According to the human rights centre Viasna, more than 360 people [were detained](#) at the 'solidarity chain' rallies (as well as before and after the rallies), held throughout the country from 18 to 21 June.

[Nat'l security law for HK deters foreign troublemakers](#)

Global Times, By GT staff reporters Source:Global Times Published: 2020/7/1 1:36:07

Days before the law was passed, some foreign groups began cutting ties with Hong Kong rioters. For example, the **US Agency for Global Media (USAGM)** reportedly froze \$2 million that was meant to be used to support the protests in Hong Kong, which analysts said further proved the legitimacy and urgency of the law.

[CHINA](#)

[Beijing Orders Four U.S. Media Outlets to Provide Information on China Operations](#)

Move comes after U.S. designated four major Chinese state-media outlets as foreign missions

Wall Street Journal, By [Chao Deng](#)

July 1, 2020 5:29 am ET

•

Beijing is requiring four U.S. media outlets to disclose detailed information about their China operations, in the latest move in a tit-for-tat media battle with the Trump administration.

The Associated Press, United Press International, CBS News and National Public Radio must declare their personnel and property in China, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said Wednesday in a regular media briefing. Mr. Zhao said the measure was meant to counter the U.S. designation last month of [four major Chinese state-media outlets](#) as foreign missions.

Mr. Zhao said the new requirements were “necessary countermeasures and completely justifiable defenses” in response to what he described as the U.S.’s discrimination against and suppression of Chinese media.

The four outlets have until July 7 to turn over the information. It is unclear whether any further steps will be required of them. Collectively, the outlets have about a dozen foreign staff in China. Representatives for the four outlets didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment.

Beijing and Washington have been locked in a media feud that has seen reporters expelled from both countries this year. Beijing has been seeking to limit criticism of the Communist Party, particularly its handling of the coronavirus pandemic in the days after it began spreading in the central Chinese city of Wuhan late last year. The Trump administration, meanwhile, has sought to take a harder stance on Beijing, including curbing Chinese actions seen as inimical to U.S. interests.

Beijing [expelled three Wall Street Journal journalists](#) in February in what it described as retaliation against a headline on an opinion piece that was seen as objectionable by Beijing and many people in China.

In March, the U.S. responded by imposing a personnel cap on four major state-run Chinese media outlets in the U.S., forcing them to reduce their Chinese employees in the U.S. to 100 in total, from 160.

Beijing [retaliated by expelling reporters](#) from the Journal, the New York Times and the Washington Post. In that case, China ordered the newspapers and two other media outlets—**Voice of America** and Time magazine—to submit information about staff, finances, operations and real estate in China.

Washington in May reduced the length of work visas for journalists from mainland China employed by non-U.S. media to a maximum of 90 days. Last month, it also began treating China Central Television, the China News Service, the People's Daily and the Global Times as foreign missions.

Write to Chao Deng at Chao.Deng@wsj.com

Related:

Bloomberg - <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-07-01/china-orders-more-american-news-outlets-to-declare-finances?srnd=politics-vp>

[Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian's Regular Press Conference on July 1, 2020](#)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2020/07/01

In recent years, the US government has placed unwarranted restrictions on Chinese media agencies and personnel in the US, purposely made things difficult for their normal reporting assignments, and subjected them to growing discrimination and politically-motivated oppression. On February 18, 2020, the US designated five Chinese media agencies, namely, Xinhua News Agency, China Daily Distribution Corporation, China Global Television Network, China Radio International, and distributor for People's Daily in the US Hai Tian Development USA, as foreign missions. In the spirit of reciprocity, China demanded on March 18 that the China-based branches of **Voice of America**, ...

From: (b) (6)
To: [USAGM Media Clips](#)
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Friday, September 4, 2020 9:22:34 AM

[Helsinki Commission Demands Answers on Failure of USAGM to Renew J-1 Visas for Voice of America Journalists](#)

CSCE

September 03, 2020

[Sped-up census is a recipe for inaccuracy](#)

Our View: Trump's obsession with undocumented residents threatens to undermine the accuracy of the count.

USA Today

September 3, 2020

The Editorial Board

[Right of Reply to the Russian Federation on American Violations of Freedom of Expression](#)

US Mission to the OSCE

As delivered by Ambassador James S. Gilmore III
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 3, 2020

[Chinese officials will be brought to account for rights abuses in Tibet if I'm next US president, says Biden](#)

South China Morning Post

September 4, 2020

Catherine Wong

From: (b) (6)
To: (b) (6); Oanh Tran; Marie Lennon; David Kligerman;
Grant Turner; Terry Balazs; Shawn Powers; (b) (6); Jeffrey Shapiro; (b) (6);
(b) (6); Lillian Cheng; (b) (6); Gary Thatcher; (b) (6);
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(b) (6); Kelu Chao; Diane Cullo; Emily Pauline Newman; Daniel Hanlon; Logan B. McVey; Jonathan
Bronitsky; Michael B. Williams; Andre Mendes; (b) (6);
Cc: USAGM Public Affairs Staff
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 9:55:35 AM

The Verge - <https://www.theverge.com/21301542/otf-usagm-michael-pack-lawsuit-congress-open-technology-fund>

Fox News - <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-appointee-head-of-media-agency-sued>

NPR - <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/24/882654831/citing-a-breached-firewall-media-leaders-sue-u-s-official-over-firings>

Daily Beast - <https://www.thedailybeast.com/michael-pack-sued-for-mass-firings-at-us-government-funded-global-media-agency>

The American Conservative - <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/michael-pack-is-right-to-rein-in-state-funded-broadcasters/>

Silicon Angle - <https://siliconangle.com/2020/06/23/concerns-anti-censorship-open-technology-fund-amid-trump-administration-changes/>

Reuters- <https://moneyandmarketswatchdog.com/house-committee-calls-trump-broadcasting-chief-to-testify/>

DW - <https://www.dw.com/en/us-media-agency-reform-triggers-fears-for-global-internet-freedom/a-53917168>

CEIP - <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/06/24/philippines-is-democracy-s-dystopian-future-pub-82147>

SFRC - <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/ranking/release/menendez-requests-inspector-general-probe-into-michael-packs-wednesday-night-massacre>

HFAC - <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/2020/6/engel-calls-on-new-head-of-usagm-to-testify-before-foreign-affairs-committee>

[Lawsuit Argues Dismissal of Government-Funded Media Employees Was Unlawful](#)

The suit is the first legal action taken against Michael Pack after he fired the

heads of the technology organization and four journalism outlets under his purview last week.

NYT, By Pranshu Verma

- June 23, 2020
- WASHINGTON — An internet freedom nonprofit under the umbrella of the U.S. government's global media agency [filed a lawsuit on Tuesday](#) against the agency's new chief executive, Michael Pack, calling his move last week to replace their top staff and governing board unlawful.

The lawsuit, filed on behalf of the Open Technology Fund, is the first legal action taken against Mr. Pack after he [dismissed the heads of the technology organization and four news outlets](#) under his purview, along with their bipartisan governing boards. The firings drew fierce criticism from Republican and Democratic lawmakers, who suggested Mr. Pack's ties to the Trump administration would turn independently operated organizations into mouthpieces for the White House.

According to the court filing, Mr. Pack, the chief of the United States Agency for Global Media, does not have the legal authority to fire any staff or governing board member of the Open Technology Fund.

MASS FIRINGS

Read [the full lawsuit](#) filed against Michael Pack, the chief of the United States Agency for Global Media.

The lawsuit, filed in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, also states that in firing the chiefs of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Mr. Pack violated a "firewall" clause in a federal broadcasting law and agency regulations that shield the government-funded news outlets from political interference and manipulation.

"The law protects the independence of these organizations," said Ben Scott, a plaintiff in the lawsuit who had served on the board of the Open Technology Fund. "We will not stand aside while these principles are trampled."

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The suit asks a federal judge to nullify the firings, claiming that the board members and staff Mr. Pack removed still legally hold their positions.

Aside from the Open Technology Fund and Mr. Scott, plaintiffs in the lawsuit include Michael W. Kempner, Ryan C. Crocker and Karen Kornbluh, all of

whom were dismissed as board members of the U.S. Agency for Global Media and the Open Technology Fund.

Representatives for the U.S. Agency for Global Media could not be immediately reached for comment.

Mr. Pack has yet to name successors of top employees at the news organizations he now oversees. He replaced the bipartisan boards that govern and advise those entities with political appointees of the Trump administration, including himself as chairman. One board member works for a conservative advocacy organization, [Liberty Counsel Action](#).

The actions by Mr. Pack, a conservative filmmaker, raised questions about the editorial independence of the groups given that Mr. Pack is a close ally of Stephen K. Bannon, the former campaign strategist and White House adviser to President Trump who has [pressed Mr. Trump](#) to take charge of the news organizations and reshape them to his purposes.

“What he has done is a great gift to China, Russia and repressive regimes across the world,” Mr. Kempner said. “There are not many gifts bigger than destroying one of the few mechanisms for people to send and receive information within closed press, closed information societies.”

On Tuesday, Senator Bob Menendez of New Jersey, the top Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, requested the State Department’s Office of the Inspector General to review whether Mr. Pack violated the law in dismissing the heads of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, the Office of Cuba Broadcasting and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks.

The chief of the Open Technology Fund, Libby Liu, offered her resignation in mid-June. It was accepted by the group’s board that day, and was to go into effect a month later, but Mr. Pack asked for her immediate dismissal last Wednesday.

The group started as a pilot program within Radio Free Asia in 2012. In 2019, Congress allowed it to become an independent nonprofit grantee of the Agency for Global Media. Lawmakers appropriated \$20 million in funding to the group in the 2020 fiscal year.

The organization finances and supports secure internet and encrypted communication technology — like Signal and Tor — in countries with censorship. Since 2012, such tools have allowed over two billion people in 60 countries to gain access to the internet free from censorship and surveillance.

Advocates of internet freedom have pointed to Mr. Pack’s actions as reason to be wary of the Open Technology Fund should it become a partisan arm of the Trump administration. Over 480 human rights groups, news media watchdogs and dissident organizations have [signed a letter](#) urging Congress to protect the fund’s work.

But even if the lawsuit is successful, former employees of the fund are worried that the Agency for Global Media might withhold about \$11 million of the organization's 2020 budget, according to Laura Cunningham, who was removed as president of the Open Technology Fund.

"That money is in limbo right now," she said, noting that without the remaining money, the fund would not "be able to support any new projects going forward."

The lawsuit also asks a federal judge to deny Mr. Pack or his aides the ability to freeze grant funds already allocated to the technology nonprofit and news outlets.

The Republican-led Senate confirmed Mr. Pack's nomination this month along party lines. It had been delayed for years by Senate Democrats.

Last month, the attorney general for the District of Columbia said his office was [investigating whether Mr. Pack](#) illegally enriched himself by sending \$1.6 million from the Public Media Lab, a nonprofit group he oversees, to his for-profit film production company.

Additional coverage:

Reuters: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-broadcasting-idUSKBN23U2TV>

Axios - <https://www.axios.com/falun-gong-us-agency-global-media-001fcf52-95fa-43de-b0c7-0cd7cfc2918f.html>

- relate: <https://twitter.com/mradamtaylor/status/1275454622987980800?s=12>

The Verge - <https://www.theverge.com/2020/6/23/21300424/open-technology-fund-usagm-circumvention-tools-china-censorship-michael-pack>

The Hill - <https://thehill.com/homenews/house/504063-house-democrat-calls-on-us-media-agency-head-to-testify-about-firings>

CNBC - <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/23/bob-menendez-calls-for-inspector-general-to-investigate-michael-pack.html>

EFF - <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2020/06/otfs-work-keep-internet-free-and-open-successful-dont-throw-it-away>

EA News - <https://eastautonews.com/bob-menendez-calls-for-inspector-general-to-investigate-michael-pack-east-auto-news/>

VOA - <https://www.voanews.com/usa/key-us-lawmaker-calls-new-government-media-chief-testify>

Atlantic Council (blog) - <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/us-government-broadcasters-have-long-advanced-the-cause-of-freedom-now-theyre-under-threat/>

Global Government Forum - <https://www.globalgovernmentforum.com/trumps-new-overseas-broadcast-head-sacks-network-chiefs-and-advisory-boards/>

Wonkette.com - <https://www.wonkette.com/donald-trump-may-finally-have-his-very-own-propaganda-network-it-used-to-be-voice-of-america>

Moyers for Democracy - <https://billmoyers.com/story/how-trump-really-is-the-voice-of-america/>

WIBQ - <https://wibqam.com/2020/06/23/u-s-house-committee-calls-trump-broadcasting-chief-to-testify/>

U.S. Designates Four More Chinese News Organizations as Foreign Missions

The move brings to nine the total number of Chinese state-run news organizations that the State Department has designated with that label. China will most likely retaliate.

NYT, By **Edward Wong**

- June 22, 2020
-

[阅读简体中文版](#)[閱讀繁體中文版](#)

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration announced on Monday that it was designating [four more](#) Chinese state-run media organizations that have operations in the United States [as foreign missions](#), in a new round of restrictions likely to lead to some form of retaliation from China.

State Department officials said they were taking the action to make it clear to American citizens that the organizations are viewed by the U.S. government as propaganda organs for a foreign government. The groups will be asked to send to the department a complete roster of employees in the United States and a list of their real estate holdings.

David R. Stilwell, the assistant secretary for East Asia and the Pacific, declined to say in a telephone briefing with reporters what actions the United States might then take based on that information.

The move is part of broader efforts by some Trump administration officials to [counter aggressive policies by China](#), though President Trump himself [has undermined the campaign](#) at times and has pleaded with Xi Jinping, the Chinese leader whom he describes fondly on Twitter, to help ensure his re-election, according to a new book by John R. Bolton, Mr. Trump's former national security adviser.

In February, after the first round of such designations of Chinese news organizations, and after a move by China to [expel three journalists](#) for The Wall Street Journal, the Trump administration imposed visa quotas on the five organizations that it had labeled functionaries of a foreign government.

That meant cutting the visas of 60 foreign employees. The Chinese government then [expelled American journalists](#) for The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal. That action resulted in the departures of about 13 journalists from China. The four organizations designated Monday are China Central Television, China News Service, People's Daily and Global Times.

"These entities are not independent news organizations," Mr. Stilwell said, adding that they were "substantially owned or effectively controlled" by the Chinese Communist Party or the Chinese government.

China Central Television is the main state-run television network in China. Its main overseas arm, China Global Television Network, or CGTN, was listed in the first round of designations in February.

People's Daily is the main Communist Party newspaper. In the February designations, the State Department named a related company, Hai Tian Development USA, which distributes the newspaper in the United States.

Global Times is a nationalistic newspaper that is not an official outlet for party statements in the same way People's Daily is, but it is owned by People's Daily. Its editor in chief, Hu Xijin, is [outspoken on Twitter](#), where he often criticizes the foreign policy of the United States.

China News Service is the second-largest news agency in China, behind Xinhua, which the State Department designated in February.

The State Department [also designated](#) that month China Daily Distribution Corporation, an arm of China's official English-language newspaper, and China Radio International.

Mr. Stilwell said the State Department did not have numbers on foreign employees who currently work for the four newly designated organizations.

He added that although American officials were concerned about Chinese propaganda, the administration had no plans to cut off distribution channels for the state-run news organizations.

The telephone briefing on press freedoms in China and the United States [turned testy](#) when a Reuters reporter tried to ask Mr. Stilwell a question about Mr. Bolton's book and the administration's China policy. Morgan Ortagus, a State Department spokeswoman, said the question was inappropriate and told the AT&T operator to "mute that line." After a Bloomberg News reporter tried following up by asking about that action in the context of press freedoms, she said his question was "offensive."

In recent years, China has intensified its efforts to coerce foreign news organizations into self-censoring their coverage. Notably, the Chinese Foreign Ministry has increasingly refrained from issuing visas to news organizations whose reporting it deems too critical or shortened the length of time of visas or residency permits issued to correspondents, from the standard one-year period to as brief as one month. The Chinese government did this to Times journalists, among others, before expelling almost all of them in March.

OF INTEREST:

[EU prepares to ban American travelers as borders reopen on July 1](#)

Axios, Jacob Knutson

Travelers around the world have been banned from traveling to the EU since mid-March, but countries have been starting to lift travel restrictions to fellow member states within the bloc over the past few weeks.

The final decision on which countries will be excluded from the EU's list of admissible travelers is expected early next week, before the bloc reopens on July 1.

[POLITICO Playbook PM](#)

By [ANNA PALMER](#), [JAKE SHERMAN](#), [ELI OKUN](#) and [GARRETT ROSS](#) 06/23/2020
01:00 PM EDT

NSC ARRIVAL LOUNGE -- Paul Bresson is now director for strategic comms at the NSC. He previously was unit chief in the FBI's office of public affairs.

From: (b) (6)
To: [USAGM Media Clips](#)
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Friday, August 28, 2020 9:08:28 AM

[Why Public Broadcasting Drifted Left And What Can Be Done To Fix It](#)

The Federalist
August 27, 2020
The Federalist Staff

[POLITICO Playbook PM: The latest on Covid relief negotiations](#)

POLITICO Playbook PM
August 26, 2020
Jake Sherman, Anna Palmer, Garrett Ross and Eli Okun

[How women's role in Belarus protests captured global media attention](#)

From solidarity to stereotypes, women protesters against Lukashenka have captured the attention of both mainstream and conservative media.

openDemocracy
August 28, 2020
Claire Provost, Claudia Torrisi, Inge Snip

[Irish journalist denied visa in Hong Kong amid national security law concerns](#)

CNN Business
August 27, 2020
James Griffiths

From: (b) (6)
To: Oanh Tran; Marie Lennon; David Kligerman;
Grant Turner; Terry Balazs; Shawn Powers; (b) (6); Jeffrey Shapiro; (b) (6);
(b) (6); Lillian Cheng; (b) (6); Gary Thatcher; (b) (6);
(b) (6); Public Relations; (b) (6); James Reeves; (b) (6);
(b) (6); Keli Chao; Diane Cullio; Emily Pauline Newman; Daniel Hanlon; Logan B. McVey; Jonathan
Bronitsky; Michael B. Williams; Andre Mendes; (b) (6); Elez Biberaj; VOA Division
Directors; (b) (6)
Cc: USAGM Public Affairs Staff
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Monday, July 13, 2020 9:50:35 AM

US & World // News

[Undaunted, US global media chief plows ahead with changes](#)

By MATTHEW LEE, **AP** Diplomatic Writer July 13, 2020 Updated: July 13, 2020 5:05 a.m.

[US broadcast agency to stop renewing visas for foreign journalists](#)

Arab News, Updated 12 July 2020

Zaira Lakhpatwala

July 12, 2020, 14:40

- According to VOA, approximately 76 foreign journalists are facing the possibility that their visas may not be renewed
- The move also affects employees at other USAGM entities

DUBAI: The US Agency for Global Media (USAGM) might not renew visas for foreign journalists working at Voice of America (VOA).

...

A USAGM spokesperson told VOA that the agency was conducting a case-by-case assessment of J-1 renewal applications, and so far none of the journalists seeking J-1 extensions appears to have been rejected outright. The spokesperson added said the visa review is aimed at improving agency management, protecting US national security and ensuring that hiring authorities are not misused.

Media organizations have spoken out against the news. "This reported decision puts the lives of intrepid, free-thinking foreign journalists at risk. Many of these journalists have worked with VOA precisely because it offers them the opportunity to report

[USAGM CEO Defends Firings After Senators Expressed Concerns](#)

Voice of America [via Malaysia Sun]

13 Jul 2020, 21:35 GMT+10

Press Freedom

[Visa Delays Could Hamper VOA News Coverage, Journalists Say](#)

VOA News, By Jessica Jerreat

July 11, 2020 06:16 PM

[Journalism groups call on US media agency to renew foreign journalists' visas](#)

The Hill, By Rafael Bernal - 07/10/20 02:36 PM EDT

In a statement, the National Press Club and its Journalism Institute said USAGM was "placing dozens of journalists under a cloud of uncertainty and threatening not only their job security but their personal safety as well."

[National Press Club and Journalism Institute call on USAGM to renew VOA journalists' visas](#)

National Press Club, July 10, 2020

Lindsay Underwood, lunderwood@press.org

WASHINGTON -- [The National Press Club](#) and the [National Press Club Journalism Institute](#) urge the United States Agency for Global Media and its new executive, Michael Pack, to renew expiring visas for foreign journalists working in the U.S. for Voice of America's international services.

Published on Friday, July 10, 2020

by **Common Dreams**

['An Outrage': Trump-Appointed Head of Global News Agency Won't Extend Visas for Foreign Journalists](#)

"It is appalling that the VOA's new boss could be so reckless about the safety of journalists," said PEN America.

by Julia Conley, staff writer

About: <https://www.commondreams.org/about-us>

[Trump appointee cutting 10 visas for international journalists, may not extend dozens more](#)

By Margaret Brennan, Camilla Schick

July 10, 2020 / 9:36 AM / **CBS News**

Additional coverage:

O'Dwyer's - <https://www.odwyerpr.com/story/public/14562/2020-07-10/media-maneuvers-foxer-shep-smith-resurfaces-at-cnbc.html>

Raw Story - <https://www.rawstory.com/2020/07/the-gop-is-a-suicide-cult/>

The Independent - <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/trump-visa-journalists-voice-of-america-michael-pack-a9613321.html>

Southgate Amateur Radio News - <http://www.southgatearc.org/news/2020/july/us-global-media-agency-seeks-to-kick-out-international-journalists.htm#.Xww3Q25FyUk>

CNN, Updated 7:52 PM ET, Fri July 10, 2020

- <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/10/media/usagm-voice-of-america-visas/index.html>

Columbia Journalism Review

- https://www.cjr.org/the_media_today/joy_reid_msnbc_shep_smith_cnbc.php

Poynter - <https://www.poynter.org/newsletters/2020/dozens-of-foreign-national-voice-of-america-correspondents-wont-have-their-visas-extended/>

Yakima Herald: Letters: https://www.yakimaherald.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-voice-of-america-politicized/article_c869524e-44dc-53b8-86b7-1039e07e311a.html

[Nombramiento de nuevo director interino de Radio y TV Martí provoca polémica](#)

por Mario J. Pentón

El Nuevo Herald, 10 de julio de 2020 03:30 PM , Actualizado 10 de julio de 2020 04:26 PM

[via Google translate/original article contains links]

Appointment of new acting director of Radio and TV Martí provokes controversy

by Mario J. Penton

July 10, 2020 03:30 PM , Updated July 10, 2020 04:26 PM

The appointment of a new interim director of Radio and TV Martí linked to a former White House official has provoked controversy in the corridors of federal broadcasters, facing a \$7 million reduction in his budget proposal for this fiscal year, according to several employees.

The broadcasters have also suffered from a case of coronavirus, which affected the programming aimed at Cuba.

The controversy was sparked by the announcement in late June that lawyer and former investigative reporter Jeffrey Scott Shapiro, ally of former White House chief strata Steve Bannon, would take over Radio and TV Martí, which are funded by the federal government with a budget of \$29 million.

"Everyone knows that he is a custom-appointed director of Trump," one employee said. "The fear is that they want to turn us into a propaganda machine of the administration and let go of our mission, which is to provide Cuba with truthful information," the employee added.

Radio Martí, founded in 1985, and TV Martí in 1990, have as their mission "to bring to Cuba uncensored information" from South Florida, where a large community of Cuban exiles lives.

This effort has been hampered by the recent case of coronavirus.

"A non-federal employee who last worked on the building on Friday, July 3 tested positive for coronavirus," confirmed a spokesman for the U.S. Global Media Agency (USAGM), which is run by The Office of Transmissions to Cuba (OCB), responsible for the broadcasters.

"As a precaution and in accordance with established guidelines and best practices, staff were ordered to work remotely until the facility could be thoroughly disinfected. Some of the programming was temporarily affected," he added.

The existence of broadcasters has been one of the points of friction between the Cuban government and the American government. Cuba demanded that Barack Obama's administration eliminate them during the relationship restoration process.

Broadcasters have been at the center of the public eye after a report commissioned by the federal government that broadcasters were making ineffective propaganda and poor journalism. The last confirmed director, former Mayor Tomás Regalado, resigned following a scandal involving his son, also an employee of the entity, fired for allegedly manipulating a news story.

How the new director was appointed

The federal Senate confirmed the appointment of Michael Pack, a conservative documentary filmmaker, as director of the Global Media Agency, the parent company of Radio and TV Martí, last June. After taking over, Pack fired the directors of several international broadcasters without consulting Congress, including Radio and TV Martí.

To direct Radio and Televisión Martí, Pack appointed Shapiro, who since 2017 was the station's senior advisor. Shapiro is a close ally of Steve Bannon, former Chief White House strategist, according to CNN and Politico sources.

The 47-year-old journalist and lawyer has written for newspapers such as The Washington Times and the Los Angeles Times on issues related to killings and terrorist attacks in the United States and Europe.

"Shapiro had been working in Martí for three years without anyone knowing exactly what his job was. It was supposed to be Martí's liaison to Washington but he never got an exclusive interview or when [former Homeland Security adviser John] Bolton came to Miami," said one station employee who asked not to be identified for fear of reprisals.

A former employee who worked with Shapiro recounted that "his ignorance of the Cuban subject is such that he did not even know that there was a Cuba interest office in Washington since 1977."

"I don't remember anything relevant Scott Shapiro did on Radio and TV Martí beyond his accusations to former director Maria Malule Gonzalez of being an agent of Castro's government," she added.

Shapiro's office did not respond to requests for statements from the New Herald.

Budget reduction

Radio Martí was created by President Ronald Reagan in 1985 in the late Cold War. Congress initially opposed broadcasters, but the White House managed to get a \$6 million budget approved. Over time, Martí Television was created in 1990 and Martinoticias.com, the online page of the stations. The budget reached \$30 million.

For 35 years, Radio Martí has been broadcasting to Cuba and thanks to its work has managed to uncover crimes such as the sinking in 1994 of the March 13 Tugboat by Cuban government forces, where 41 people, 10 of them children, died.

The Martí Television signal, despite multiple efforts and promises, is repeatedly blocked by the island government and can only be seen through satellite dishes, banned in Cuba.

Federal broadcasters are in the process of adjustments to meet this fiscal year's budget, cut by seven million. Radio and Televisión Martí have a workforce of more than 100 federal employees in addition to about 70 contractors.

According to several employees consulted by the New Herald, "most contractors have had their hours reduced for two months."

"It is sad that the most affected have been journalists, which affects the quality of our content. There are employees who do administrative tasks, but who are relatives of exile figures that no one touches," said a contractor for the station.

According to Politico, the cuts are due to the station's funding being held by senators in Congress who are calling for the director of the USAGM to testify about his recent layoffs. Politico says there is concern in Congress about a possible politicization of broadcasters.

For fiscal year 2021, the budget reduction of the two stations is \$13 million, sources knowledgeable of the situation said.

A former agency employee said it "hurts" to see the process of defunding the broadcasters "because at the time they were a conquest of Cuban exile."

"I have mixed feelings because I know many good journalists who work there, but I also know that big mistakes have been made, like when they deceived the federal government by saying that... Martí television would be seen in Cuba," he said.

Follow me on Twitter and Facebook: @MarioJPenton. New Herald reporter Nora Gámez contributed this story.

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The Post's View

Opinion

[Failing to renew VOA foreign staffers' visas would devastate one of its core functions](#)

Opinion by Editorial Board

Washington Post, July 10, 2020 at 1:06 p.m. EDT

MICHAEL PACK, the alt-right filmmaker installed by President Trump to run U.S. foreign broadcasting operations, remains on course to dismantle the independent journalism that has been their calling card. Last month, shortly after taking office as chief executive of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, Mr. Pack summarily fired the top editors of four outlets, including Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty; the two top editors of Voice of America resigned. Now, VOA sources say, Mr. Pack is refusing to renew the visas of foreign-born journalists who are vital to its mission of producing news reports in 47 languages.

Opinion

[War on Trump USAGM Pick Michael Pack Undermines U.S. Battle With China | Opinion](#)

Ben Weingarten , Senior Fellow, London Center for Policy Research

Newsweek, On 7/13/20 at 7:30 AM EDT

Nearly a full term into the Donald Trump presidency, the administration was finally able to fill a little-known but pivotal seat with someone of the president's choosing. The political establishment had worked tirelessly to block the appointment. Its obstruction would continue post-confirmation. The appointee was subjected to an onslaught from Congress, in the courts and in the press. The apparent aim was to undermine him as part of a broader effort to undermine the president's policies.

The continued fight against Michael Pack, the new CEO of the U.S. Agency for Global Media

(USAGM), is a microcosm of the fight of this presidency: to overcome a political establishment unwilling to afford the president the same privileges as his predecessors—including to staff the executive branch with supporters. That is, to overcome a Washington, D.C. hellbent on preventing the peaceful transfer of power.

In so doing, it is the Resistance that has [eviscerated](#) our norms, values and [institutions](#). In its jihad against Mr. Pack, it has done so to the detriment of our national security interests.

USAGM is an essential part of America's arsenal in the War of Ideas. The independent federal agency [oversees](#) the Voice of America (VOA), Office of Cuba Broadcasting and USAGM-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, the Middle East Broadcasting Network (MBN) and Open Technology Fund. We, the American taxpayer, contribute \$800 million annually to [USAGM](#) to "inform, engage and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy." Its outlets faithfully fulfilled this mission during the Cold War. To triumph over today's Communist menace, China, it must do so again.

Enter Michael Pack. Mr. Pack is indisputably [qualified](#) to head USAGM. During his more than 40 year career, he has produced more than a dozen celebrated documentaries appearing on the Public Broadcasting Service on American politics, culture and history, and served in a number of management and editorial capacities in U.S. international broadcasting entities under both Democratic and Republican administrations.

Yet these credentials did not satisfy Senate Democrats, the sole opponents of his [confirmation](#), because of Pack's original sin: He is a patriotic, conservative American who threatens to abide by the governing [Standards & Principles](#) to which USAGM must adhere by law.

The first such [standard](#) is that broadcasts be "consistent with the broad foreign policy objectives of the United States." President Trump is primarily responsible for setting these objectives, and CEO Pack correspondingly must advance them.

This is intolerable for the likes of Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ), the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee who was chiefly responsible for slow-walking Pack's confirmation.

Sen. Menendez engaged in a two-fold line of attack: First try to make Pack radioactive by [highlighting](#) his past brief working relationship with fellow China critic (and Pack supporter) Steve Bannon, and then paint Pack as corrupt.

The purpose of the former was to create a narrative, which the press dutifully pushed, that Pack would be a Trump true-believer—horror of horrors—turning USAGM into "authoritarian" state media. This narrative persists, with publications [slandering](#) Pack, who is Jewish, with

headlines like: "Is Trump putting fascists in charge of the Voice of America?" Such attacks are analogous to those on President Trump's other most-inspired picks, such as [Amb. Richard Grenell](#) and [Attorney General William Barr](#), who were savaged as toadies who would damage the institutions they led. What President Trump's opponents truly loathe are like-minded, competent conservatives serving in his administration.

The latter [line of attack](#) was similarly specious, but also hypocritical and potentially corrupt. Recall that Sen. Menendez was the subject of a [22-count indictment](#) by the Department of Justice (DOJ) concerning an alleged bribery scheme. He purportedly enjoyed lavish vacations on Dr. Salomon Melgen's dime, gifts never cleared nor disclosed, while advocating on Dr. Melgen's behalf with government officials in connection with his over-billing of Medicare payments, businesses interests and desired visas for [his mistresses](#). After the jury in Sen. Menendez's case proved deadlocked, it was [declared a mistrial](#) and the DOJ dropped the case. But Sen. Menendez's colleagues on the Senate Ethics Committee deemed the allegations true, [admonishing](#) him for violating "Senate rules, federal law and applicable standards of conduct." Dr. Melgen would be [sentenced](#) to 17 years in prison for Medicare fraud.

Consider this background, given the seemingly frivolous charges Sen. Menendez leveled at Pack. Two days before Pack was to receive a vote out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. Menendez called for an investigation into Pack's business dealings. The night before the vote, *The Washington Post* revealed that the District of Columbia's attorney general subpoenaed him. The vote was temporarily scuttled. The probe concerned donations to Pack's nonprofit entity that were then paid to his production company in connection with his documentary work—a common structure, according to a [RealClearPolitics](#) report. Sen. Menendez's colleagues were ultimately unconvinced, Pack's nomination proceeded and he prevailed.

Meanwhile, *RealClearPolitics*' Susan Crabtree unearthed that [a member](#) of USAGM's board of governors—a New Jersey-based [major Democratic donor](#)—had gifted \$40,000 to Sen. Menendez's legal defense fund. That board was disbanded by Pack after he was seated. Was it a coincidence, then, that Sen. Menendez tried to kneecap Pack? Will the suddenly-ethical Sen. Menendez and his colleagues seemingly orchestrate such investigatory trickery to sideline future nominees?

On top of disbanding the board, Pack fired the heads of each of the USAGM-funded outlets. This caused a [bipartisan](#) backlash. Sen. Menendez [called for an inspector general investigation](#).

[Sensationalist headlines](#) blaring "Wednesday Night Massacre" reflected the typical anti-Trump media hysteria that no Democratic president would face. Only under President Trump is it verboten for an administrator to administrate.

In interviews, Pack [claimed](#) he was proceeding as he would have had he assumed his position

on schedule, including releasing both Democrats and Republicans in order to avoid any appearance of partisanship.

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia [agreed](#) he was [within his rights](#) to do so.

More importantly, notwithstanding the merits of some of the figures Pack released, such as former MBN head Ambassador Alberto Fernandez, Pack was more than justified to start anew at USAGM, given the [problems](#) ailing it under his President Obama-appointed predecessor.

Setting aside the organization's persistently poor morale and alleged [corruption](#), its greatest issue has arguably been its editorial bias to the detriment of U.S. foreign policy—particularly with respect to [America's greatest adversary](#), China.

As the White House pointed out in April 2020, VOA [parroted Beijing's propaganda](#) regarding the coronavirus pandemic for which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is most [culpable](#).

In May 2019, following Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's [landmark foreign policy speech](#) at the Claremont Institute's 40th Anniversary Gala, VOA appeared to blatantly flout its mission by limiting its coverage of the speech to its Chinese Service, which [omitted](#) Sec. Pompeo's most critical remarks about the CCP.

This came on the heels of the VOA's censoring of an April 2017 interview with CCP dissident-in-exile Guo Wengui. The [interviewer](#), Mandarin Service Chief Sasha Gong, as well as four colleagues, were suspended without pay. Gong and two others were ultimately [fired](#).

This is to say nothing of the VOA's alleged [running](#) of [pro-Iranian propaganda](#).

The White House was right to [assert](#) that the "VOA too often speaks for America's adversaries—not its citizens."

Pack [is changing that](#). He [observes](#):

"China is stepping up its propaganda campaigns. ...And I don't think we're doing as well as we should in the war of ideas, putting our values and our ideas out there—and that is the principal mission of these agencies.

"It's a legal obligation. ...My plan is to bring this agency back to what it was legally required to do."

In a separate interview, he [adds](#):

"We need to get our values out...values and principles...as enshrined in the Declaration and Constitution...that we as a country are dedicated to that are very different from the principles of communist China."

Though [undeterred](#), Pack has come under attack for this position from [The New York Times](#) and [Axios](#) by daring to consider options for breaking through China's "Great Firewall" from sources affiliated with the Falun Gong, victims of brutal CCP persecution. According to a *Times* headline, such a pursuit could "put global internet freedom at risk." *Axios* concluded, "A far-right take-over of an independent U.S. government agency may allow once-fringe ideas promulgated by a controversial religious group to become official policy."

The CCP could not ask for more.

I spent several days with Pack in 2015 while obtaining a Publius Fellowship at the aforementioned Claremont Institute, where he formerly served as president. Consistent with his remarks, Pack demonstrated an ardent belief in America's founding principles—and the imperative to instill them through media.

These sentiments may qualify as subversive in this time of statue-toppling, but they are needed at USAGM.

That presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden has said he would [fire](#) Pack is not only an endorsement of Pack, but an [inadvertent admission](#) of his importance to [countering China](#).

President Trump should be cheered for [pushing](#) an intransigent establishment to seat Pack. The benefits will redound to all Americans.

Ben Weingarten is a senior fellow at the London Center for Policy Research, fellow at the Claremont Institute and senior contributor to The Federalist. He is the author of [American Ingrate: Ilhan Omar and the Progressive-Islamist Takeover of the Democratic Party](#) (Bombardier, 2020). Ben is the founder and CEO of ChangeUp Media LLC, a media consulting and production company. Subscribe to his newsletter at bit.ly/bhwnews, and follow him on Twitter [@bhweingarten](#).

The views expressed in this article are the writer's own.

the media equation

[While America Looks Away, Autocrats Crack Down on Digital News Sites](#)

Independent journalism is on the defensive, from Hungary to Malaysia.

By Ben Smith

NYT, July 12, 2020

Like many American media types, I spent a lot of time last week reading heated arguments about free speech. I was wondering if I,

[too](#), could count myself as a “[veteran of the Twitter wars](#)” when Steven Gan distracted me by telling me about his car.

Mr. Gan, the co-founder and editor in chief of Malaysia’s most important political news site, is leaving his hatchback at home on Monday morning and catching a ride to court with a colleague. That’s because Mr. Gan thinks there’s a good chance he’ll be going straight from the courthouse to jail.

The nominal [charge against him](#) is contempt of court, a charge brought because his site, Malaysiakini, briefly hosted user comments insulting the judiciary. But his real crime, in the eyes of the government, appears to be his years of straightforward journalism, often chronicling the corruption of the faction that recently retook power in Malaysia.

“Power is consolidating power” around the world, said Maria Ressa, the co-founder of the Filipino site Rappler, who has been watching with alarm and sympathy from Manila, across the South China Sea. “By taking out independent news groups, it’s easier for the voice with the loudest megaphone to shape reality.”

Ms. Ressa, who is currently out on bail after a conviction under a new “cyber libel” law, has emerged as perhaps the world’s best spokeswoman for journalism that confronts power. That power, in her case, is the Trump-like Philippines president, Rodrigo Duterte, who [ranted](#) last week about the “bright girls” attacking him and said he was compiling information on Ms. Ressa, in particular.

I first met Ms. Ressa, and Mr. Gan’s co-founder, Premesh Chandran, and a half dozen digital media entrepreneurs from difficult places when I was running BuzzFeed, a high-profile new newsroom. They often came to our gleaming Manhattan headquarters, sat with me at long tables in our cafeteria and asked advice from an American company that was leading a global explosion of digital media outlets.

It quickly became clear that the premise of those conversations was ludicrous. I should have been seeking their advice. They had, on shoestring budgets and in the face of unrestrained government pressure, created the kind of mission-driven, scrappy and successful news sites that American start-ups dreamed of becoming. Malaysiakini, founded back in the long-ago Slate era, the 1990s, built the sort of robust subscription business that almost everyone is now trying to generate. When government attacks cost Rappler a third of its advertising in one month in 2018, it began doing data analysis for businesses to keep itself afloat. The Russian site Meduza started what became a breakout podcast network with a couple of microphones

in a cramped apartment in Riga, Latvia. Its app includes a special setting for users in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, who would otherwise be blocked.

And then there's their physical courage. Mr. Gan could well be in prison by the time you read this. Ms. Ressa is awaiting her appeal. Lina Attalah, the editor in chief of one of Egypt's few remaining independent voices, Mada Masr, was [arrested](#) while interviewing an activist in May and is also out on bail. A Meduza correspondent was held by police in Moscow for two nights on trumped-up drug charges last summer.

"They are the little Gaulish village holding out against Rome," marveled Naresh Fernandes, the editor and co-founder of Scroll, an Indian news site. Scroll, like the Hong Kong Free Press, represents a different strain in the current crisis for independent media — both are digital outlets in countries now rolling back their once-robust free press traditions.

The reporters and editors of this global generation of digital start-ups are, pound for pound, the most impressive journalists in the world. Their high-impact, low-cost model is seen as "the future of journalism in places where investigative or accountability journalism is difficult," says Joel Simon, the executive director of the Committee to Protect Journalists.

The attacks on them are a tribute to their power, to an independence that reflects the best promise of the internet and to the threats they pose to corrupt and autocratic leaders.

But these outlets are now in more danger than ever. Even as they are facing the same advertising challenges from Facebook and Google — and now an economic crisis — that have stalled the growth of American digital media, they are contending with autocrats who increasingly draw their attacks from a common playbook. Many governments around the world are looking to an alternative model in China, which puts tight controls on domestic media and is in the process of imposing its stifling regime on Hong Kong. And digital upstarts aren't the only ones feeling it — in the Philippines on Friday, Congress [voted](#) not to renew the franchise of the country's main broadcaster, and Russia is [pursuing](#) treason charges against a respected former print journalist.

The coronavirus crisis, meanwhile, has given governments from Thailand to Cambodia to Hungary an excuse to crack down on independent media. The pandemic is also creating new tensions between authoritarian governments that seek to control the story of the spread and international outlets that, as domestic crackdowns intensify, can still sometimes report freely and be read locally online.

And then there's President Trump. It can sometimes be hard to put your finger on the concrete effects of his corrosive rhetoric, but you can look to media around the world to see them. American private and nonprofit investment, and official political support, through the years had been a double-edged sword for independent media. That support helped new outlets around the world get a foothold, but the American connection could also be used to accuse them of disloyalty.

President Trump appears to have laid down the sword entirely.

“The knowledge that the United States and other Western democracies are going to be on your case often deters authoritarian leaders from taking these kinds of actions,” said Representative Tom Malinowski of New Jersey, who was assistant secretary of State for democracy, human rights and labor in the Obama administration. Not any more. Now, he said, “the official policy of the president of the United States is that free and independent media are the enemy of the people.”

Last week, in a particularly clear [signal](#) to autocrats around the world, the Trump administration began refusing to renew visas for **Voice of America** employees, some of whom may be driven back into the arms of authoritarian governments they’ve been criticizing on the American airwaves.

A State Department spokesman, who spoke (despite his title) on the condition he not be named, said, “The department speaks both publicly and privately about the importance of independent media and on specific cases, where appropriate, and will continue to do so.” He added that the secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, “has called on all governments to release journalists jailed for their work and to hold accountable those who commit crimes against them.”

The American media is now convulsing over questions of speech, important fights with real stakes, particularly when it comes to the decisions made by and for the giant tech platforms. But the overriding lesson from President Trump’s admirers around the world is obvious: that the ultimate, most severe threats to a free press come from governments, which, to justify their actions, have seized opportunistically on causes ranging from requiring platforms to moderate posts to cracking down on “fake news” to imposing new licensing requirements. I started reporting on the attacks on my favorite journalists like Mr. Gan and Ms. Ressa feeling pessimistic. But it’s impossible not to be moved by their perhaps insane optimism and by how much they love their work. “The fact that there is nothing else out there gives us an immense sense of purpose — it makes you feel like you’re really doing something essential despite all the odds,” Ms. Attalah said.

Mr. Gan told me he “would not have lasted 20 years if I was not an incorrigible optimist,” adding that the current crackdown in Malaysia could be the worst yet. (In fact, he asked me not to describe the make and color of his car because it could be a target for attacks.) Ms. Ressa’s motto is, “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.”

And Luz Mely Reyes, who co-founded a Venezuelan site whose name translates as “Firefly Effect,” said she has noticed one bright spot in the crisis: Even government officials have been forced to rely on her site’s and others’ reports on the coronavirus because they know the official numbers can’t be trusted.

“They know that people need information, and they know that people don’t believe them,” she said.

Ben Smith is the media columnist. He joined The Times in 2020 after eight years as founding editor in chief of BuzzFeed News. Before that, he covered politics for Politico, The New York Daily News, The New York Observer and

The New York Sun. Email: ben.smith@nytimes.com @benyt

A version of this article appears in print on July 13, 2020, Section B, Page 1 of the New York edition with the headline: News Sites Risk Wrath Of Autocrats. [Order Reprints](#) | [Today's Paper](#) | [Subscribe](#)

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[Trump Appointee Might Not Extend Visas for Foreign Journalists at V.O.A.](#)

The action could be a blow to the news-gathering abilities of Voice of America, an independently operated media agency funded by the government.

NYT, By Pranshu Verma and Edward Wong

Published July 9, 2020

Updated July 12, 2020

WASHINGTON — As many as 100 foreign citizens working in the United States as journalists for the Voice of America, a government-funded news outlet, might not have their visas extended once they expire, according to people familiar with the planning.

Michael Pack, the new chief executive for the U.S. Agency for Global Media, has indicated he may not approve extensions for any journalist holding a J-1 visa, which allows foreign citizens to temporarily work in the United States in ways that promote cultural exchanges.

The decision could be a blow to the news-gathering and global-broadcasting abilities of the V.O.A., which operates independently but is funded by the government. Foreign journalists on the specialty visa are often recruited to work there because they are able to translate American news reports into languages like Swahili or Mandarin and can do reporting using those languages.

“J-1 visas are a crucial tool for management to get the talent that is needed to run a complex multilingual news organization,” said David Ensor, a former director for the Voice of America. “That’s what V.O.A. is.”

In a statement, a spokesman for the U.S. Agency for Global Media said it was conducting a comprehensive assessment of those workers who hold J-1 visas. The move was meant to improve “agency management and protect U.S. national security,” he said, and to do so, it was “imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused.”

The planning was described by people with knowledge of the discussions, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the actions were pending.

The discussion on the visas, [first reported by NPR](#), follows the firing on Wednesday of Bay Fang, who became executive editor of Radio Free Asia after Mr. Pack removed her last month as president of the organization. She was asked to leave the organization by the acting president, Parameswaran Ponnudurai, who had recently met with Mr. Pack, according to people familiar with the actions.

Ms. Fang was one of the chiefs of four U.S.-funded news organizations and a technology group

whom Mr. Pack [removed on June 17](#), in a decision that angered Democratic and Republican lawmakers.

Those four organizations and V.O.A. are overseen by the global media agency. The director of V.O.A. and her deputy [resigned in June](#) after Mr. Pack was confirmed by the Senate.

Mr. Pack also dismissed the bipartisan boards of the organizations on June 17 and named successors, almost all of whom are Trump administration political appointees.

Last week, Mr. Pack also named James M. Miles, a former secretary of state for South Carolina, to lead [the Open Technology Fund](#), an internet freedom nonprofit under Mr. Pack's purview.

Mr. Miles is little known in the internet freedom community and his hiring was not accepted by the organization's staff, according to a letter the group's general counsel wrote to Mr. Pack, which was obtained by The New York Times.

The actions by Mr. Pack have raised questions about the editorial independence of the news outlets under his management. Mr. Pack, a conservative filmmaker, is a close ally of Stephen K. Bannon, a former campaign strategist and White House adviser to President Trump who has [pressed Mr. Trump](#) to take charge of the government-funded news organizations and reshape them.

Mr. Bannon has also publicly criticized V.O.A., calling it "a rotten fish from top to bottom."

Mr. Pack's recent actions have been [challenged in the courts](#) by the Open Technology Fund. A federal judge ruled last week in Mr. Pack's favor. The plaintiffs filed an appeal on Thursday. Pranshu Verma reported from Washington, and Edward Wong from Lewes, Del.

U.S.

[Trump Defends Playing Golf, Says Media 'Park Themselves Anywhere They Can to Get a Picture'](#)

Newsweek, By Jason Lemon On 7/12/20 at 10:35 AM EDT

Steve Harman, White House bureau chief for Voice of America News, also fact-checked the president's claim.

"During his presidency, @realDonaldTrump has been on the grounds of his golf courses or played golf elsewhere 275 times," Harman tweeted. In a follow-up post, he wrote: "During his first term in office, @BarackObama played golf 113 times."

[POLITICO Playbook](#), By [ANNA PALMER](#) and [JAKE SHERMAN](#) 07/11/2020 09:23 AM EDT
PLAYBOOKERS

TRANSITION -- Jim Tunnessen has been hired as chief information officer at the National

Endowment for the Arts. He is currently chief information officer and chief digital officer at **Voice of America**, and is a USDA and DHS alum.

From: (b) (6)
To: (b) (6); Oanh Tran; Marie Lennon; David Kligerman; Grant Turner; Terry Balazs; Shawn Powers; (b) (6); Jeffrey Shapiro; (b) (6); (b) (6); Lillian Cheng; (b) (6); (b) (6); Gary Thatcher; (b) (6); (b) (6); Public Relations; (b) (6); James Reeves; (b) (6); (b) (6); Keli Chao; Diane Cullio; Emily Pauline Newman; Daniel Hanlon; Logan B. McVey; Jonathan Bronitsky; Michael B. Williams; Andre Mendes; (b) (6); Elez Biberaj; VOA Division Directors
Cc: USAGM Public Affairs Staff
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Friday, July 10, 2020 9:54:06 AM

[New head of US Global Media wants to refocus VOA](#)

WASHINGTON EXAMINER By Jamie McIntyre

July 9, 2020 - 11:00 PM

POLITICO

foreign policy

[Cuba broadcaster confronts budget calamity amid fight with lawmakers](#)

The Office of Cuba Broadcasting has become collateral damage in a struggle between Congress and its new boss.

By DANIEL LIPPMAN

07/09/2020 06:44 PM EDT

Related:

Politico - <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/playbook/2020/07/10/new-white-house-weighing-another-swing-at-daca-489761>

[Foreign Nationals at Voice of America Won't Have Visas Renewed Under New Trump-Appointed Boss \(Report\)](#)

The Wrap, Lindsey Ellefson

15 hrs ago

In a statement sent to TheWrap, a spokesperson for the U.S. Agency for Global Media did not say whether the visas would be renewed but that the agency was doing a "case-by-case assessment" of visa-holding "personal services contractors."

"To improve agency management and protect U.S. national security, it is imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused," the spokesperson said. "As such, USAGM is undertaking a comprehensive, case-by-case assessment of personal services contractors (PSCs) who are J-1 visa holders."

['Wildly inappropriate': VOA purge continues as foreign journalists' visas cancelled](#)

Concerns that decision, which comes after the appointment of a Trump loyalist as CEO, could place reporters in danger in their home countries

Julian Borger in Washington

THE GUARDIAN, Fri 10 Jul 2020 05.00 EDT

Media

[Foreign Journalists Working For U.S. Government Broadcasters May Lose Visas](#)

NPR, July 10, 2020 3:02 AM ET

David Folkenflik Mark Katkov

Related:

Slate - <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2020/07/voa-journalists-visa-renewal.html>

NY Post - <https://nypost.com/2020/07/09/voice-of-america-wont-extend-visas-for-foreign-journalists/>

[Studio 7 Presenters Face Return From US When Visas Expire](#)

In Harare, By Cherish Kay

Studio 7 presenters face return from the United States when their visas expire

Studio 7 presenters who include Jonga Kandembiri, broadcast from Washington DC reporting on Zimbabwean issues.

[Trump Appointee Might Not Extend Visas for Foreign Journalists at V.O.A.](#)

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[Experts dissect Iran regime's disinformation campaign as COVID-19 worsens](#)

New Atlanticist by Larry Luxner

Related Experts: Holly Dagues

Michael Lipin, an editor at the Voice of America's Persian-language service, said his main sources of news are non-governmental organizations inside Iran, as well as Iran-based relatives of activists who are jailed and cannot speak for themselves, and user-generated content from Iranians themselves showing how COVID-19 has upended their daily lives. "What has been striking for me is the number of Iranians who have told us we can publish their full names, despite Iran's hostility towards VOA," Lipin said. "Despite the risk, VOA Persian has been able to interview twenty-two Iran-based activists and relatives since February. Sixteen of the Iran-based interviewees were confident enough for us to use their full names, while six others spoke to us on background."

Lipin speculated that these Iranians were willing to take such risks for two main reasons. "Some believe the Iranian government can't do much to hurt them because they're retired and no longer rely on the government for work," he said. "Others believe that in the long run, gaining international attention for their cause and raising awareness about the plight of a loved one in jail will be better for them than staying silent."

Larry Luxner is a Tel Aviv-based freelance journalist and photographer who covers the Middle East, Eurasia, Africa and Latin America. Follow him on Twitter @LLuxner.

Press Releases - Congressman Ed Case

[House Appropriations Committee Passes \\$66 Billion Fiscal Year 2021 State, Foreign Operations Bill](#)

The Bill Includes Funding for Hawai'i Projects and Priorities Sought by Appropriations Committee Member Case and Solidifying Hawaii's Central Role in the Indo-Pacific
Washington, July 9, 2020

(Honolulu, HI) – Congressman Ed Case (HI-01) announced today that he secured an 18% increase in funding for the East-West Center, situated on the campus of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, in the U.S. House Appropriations Committee's recommended Fiscal Year 2021 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill.

...

As founding co-chair of the Congressional Pacific Islands Caucus, Case also secured several provisions related to the Pacific Islands:

- Recommended funding under Titles III and IV to strengthen maritime security and combat transnational crime, improve health care, mitigate and adapt to environmental challenges, reduce disaster risk, promote economic development and strengthen democratic governance.
- Report language urging the new U.S. Development Finance Corporation (DFC) to

prioritize investments in the Pacific Islands, including to support women's economic empowerment, and requiring a report on a strategy to increase DFC investments in the region.

- Report language requiring an assessment of U.S. diplomatic and development presence in the Pacific Islands and a strategy to fill any such gaps.
- **Report language supporting coverage of Voice of America in the Pacific Islands on digital and conventional media and directing the U.S. Agency for Global Media to include plans for expanding such coverage for FY 2021.**

Blog - [07/09/2020 NEWS & COMMENTARY – KOREA](#)

Small Wars Journal, Thu, 07/09/2020 - 7:51am

News & commentary by Dave Maxwell. Edited and published by Daniel Riggs.

...

2. South Koreans Angry at North Korean YouTubers"

Note from a journalist friend:

North Korea is using YouTube in its propaganda against the US and South Korea.

North Korean government is allegedly using YouTube to create an impression that life in North Korea is normal despite coronavirus.

...

I have watched this YouTube channel. Pretty slick videos. north Korea is entering the 21st Century information age. And of course these videos are going to appeal to the younger generations who get their news from YouTube ...

...

As I look through the comments section it is obvious there are people watching these videos who have no idea of the evil nature of the Kim family regime and the human rights atrocities that are committed against the Korean people ...

...

This is why the US Agency for Global Media, and Radio Free Asia and Voice of America are so important. The Korean people in the north need the news and information provided by RFA and VOA. But we need a more comprehensive information and influence strategy that goes beyond RFA and VOA (we need them to simply execute their mission within their charter). We need the USAGM's Open Technology Fund to invest in capabilities to break down the north Korean cyber firewall and allow penetration of the north's intranet and as well

as the internal cell phone network consisting of some 6.5 million smart phones. We need get technology and software solutions to the Korean people in the north so they can have access to the full range of information and truth about the outside world as well the knowledge of universal human rights and how their own human rights are being violated by the despotic regime that is the mafia-like crime family cult known as the Kim family regime that seeks to dominate the Korean peninsula under the rule of the Guerrilla Dynasty and Gulag State.

We have proposed elements of an information and influence strategy in the final chapter of this report, Maximum Pressure 2.0A Plan for North Korea, at this [link](#).

From: (b) (6)
To: [USAGM Media Clips](#)
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 9:10:18 AM

[Michael Pack blasts Open Technology Fund: 'More concerned about covering up corruption'](#)

The Washington Times

August 25, 2020

Bill Gertz

[VOA Journalists Fly Home After USAGM Fails to Renew J-1 Visas](#)

VOA News

August 25, 2020

Jessica Jerreat

[Voice Of America Plagued By Partisan Bias. Concerns Mount As 2020 Presidential Election Draws Near](#)

The Sara Carter Show

August 25, 2020

Sarah Carter

[How Voice of America lost control of its website to obscene Russian trolls for eight years](#)

Washington Examiner

August 26, 2020

Ted Lipien

From: (b) (6)
To: [USAGM Media Clips](#)
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Monday, August 24, 2020 9:23:59 AM

[The man making waves at America's broadcasting agency](#)

In a rare interview, Michael Pack addresses the litany of criticism he has faced since assuming office in June

Jewish Insider

August 24, 2020

Marc Rod

[Some VOA journalists forced to leave US soon as visas expire](#)

Associated Press

August 21, 2020

Matthew Lee

[House Foreign Affairs chair: US media agency chief 'has much to answer for'](#)

The Hill

August 21, 2020

Rafael Bernal

[US Lawmaker Demands Answers On VOA Journalists' Expiring Visas](#)

UrduPoint

Sat 22nd August 2020 | 01:20 AM

Muhammad Irfan

[Bannon joins the long list of people Trump pretends to barely know](#)

After Steve Bannon's indictment, Trump didn't literally say, "Steve, who?" but he came close.

MSNBC

August 21, 2020

Steve Benen

OPINION

[FARRELL: VOA's Much Needed Shake-Up](#)

Daily Caller
August 21, 2020
Chris Farrell

[Uzbek Reporter Freed, Pending Investigation](#)

Voice of America [via Malaysia Sun]
24 Aug 2020

Abdullaev, 47, has filed stories for the independent regional news site Fergana, Radio Ozodlik, and the London-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting. **Radio Ozodlik is the Uzbek service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty**, a VOA sister outlet run by the U.S. Agency for Global Media.

[Summary of the video chat meeting on Belarus held on 20 August 2020 with recommendations from the off-the-record part](#)

Visegrad Insight
August 24, 2020

Hence, this Visegrad Insight Breakfast discussion aimed at providing a critical map over the situation by speaking with prominent Belarusian experts who are following the situation on the ground.

...

Franak Viacorka, Belarusian journalist, Vice President of the Digital Communication Network and consultant for **U.S. Agency for Global Media**, defined the situation as revolutionary in terms of the usage of digital technologies. In the ...

BBC MONITORING				Report	
BelaPAN news agency	Minsk	Reported	22 Aug 2020 12:49 GMT	Published	22 Aug 2020 16:11 GMT

Two Radio Liberty journalists deported from Belarus

TEXT OF REPORT IN ENGLISH BY BELARUSIAN PRIVATELY-OWNED NEWS AGENCY BELAPAN ON
22 AUGUST

Minsk, 22 August: Two journalists of the Moscow bureau of Radio Free

Europe/Radio Liberty, Yuliya Vishnevetskaya and Andrei Kiselyov, were arrested in Minsk on Friday afternoon and deported from Belarus for working in the country without accreditation from the foreign ministry.

The journalists spent several hours at a police station and were banned from entering Belarus for five years. They eventually left the country accompanied by a Russian diplomat.

Radio Liberty said that it had officially asked the Belarusian foreign ministry for accreditation for its journalists before their departure for Belarus.

Earlier this month, Belarusian authorities deported three journalists representing Current Time, a Russian-language television channel with the editorial office in Prague, and three journalists of the Russian independent television channel Dozhd (TV Rain), reportedly for working without permit.

SOURCE: BELAPAN NEWS AGENCY, MINSK, IN ENGLISH 1249 GMT 22 AUG 20

From: (b) (6)
To: (b) (6); Oanh Tran; Marie Lennon; David Kligerman; Grant Turner; Terry Balazs; Shawn Powers; (b) (6); Jeffrey Shapiro; (b) (6); Lillian Cheng; (b) (6); Gary Thatcher; (b) (6); Public Relations; (b) (6); James Reeves; (b) (6); Kulu Chao; Diane Cullio; Emily Pauline Newman; Daniel Hanlon; Logan B. McVey; Jonathan Bronitsky; Michael B. Williams; Andre Mendes; (b) (6); Elez Biberaj; VOA Division Directors; (b) (6); USAGM Public Affairs Staff; (b) (6); Toni DeLancey; Thad Strom
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 10:09:51 AM

[U.S. Broadcast Agency Didn't Thoroughly Vet Foreign Workers](#)

By Mark Hemingway & Susan Crabtree - RCP Staff

RealClear Politics, August 4, 2020

An internal government report issued by the Office of Personnel Management has uncovered a decade of gross lapses in common personnel vetting practices that are raising serious security concerns at the taxpayer-funded U.S. broadcasting agency, the umbrella organization for the flagship **Voice of America** and several other sister media outlets.

[EXCLUSIVE: Lax vetting of foreign employees at U.S. broadcasters jeopardizing national security](#)

Chinese, Iranian nationals grants improper clearances

By Bill Gertz - **The Washington Times** - Tuesday, August 4, 2020

[VOA Urdu in trouble for airing Biden video](#)

Anwar Iqbal Updated 04 Aug 2020 Facebook Count

DAWN, August 4, 2020

ZIMBABWE

[Trump Moves to Limit Foreign Workers in Federal Agencies](#)

VOA, August 4, 2020

[Republican, Democratic Lawmakers Call on USAGM to Release \\$20M for Censorship-Evading Tech](#)

By **VOA News**

August 04, 2020 09:05 AM

Los Angeles Times Opinion

[Op-Ed: Trump has pulled out of the global battle for hearts and minds](#)

Madeleine Albright and Marc Nathanson

August 4, 2020, 6:15 AM

Especially troubling are the recent moves to [gut the independence](#) of the **U.S. Agency for Global Media**, which manages the country's international broadcasting — including Voice of America, Radio/TV Marti, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Middle East Broadcasting Networks, and Radio Free Asia.

[Need to Know: August 3, 2020](#)

American Press Institute, August 3, 2020

OFFSHORE

Deleted Biden video sets off a crisis at **Voice of America** (Politico)

United States-funded Voice of America has a news service for Urdu speakers in Pakistan, India and other countries. Last month, Voice of America officials [removed a story and video](#) from a left-leaning 501(c)(4) about a Joe Biden event geared toward Muslim Americans. The network leaders determined the content broke its editorial standards and as of last week were considering suspending four contractors who played a role in running the content. The video was flagged to U.S. Agency for Global Media CEO Michael Pack, who [fired the leaders](#) of Radio Free Asia, Radio Free Europe and two other outlets soon after taking the post in June.

+ Related: With their visas in limbo, **Voice of America** journalists worry they'll [have to leave the United States](#) (The Washington Post)

[Guinea Bissau Broadcaster Radio Capital FM Vandalized](#)

CPJ PRESS RELEASE (via AllAfrica)

New York, August 3, 2020 -- Authorities in Guinea Bissau should investigate the vandalism of broadcaster Radio Capital FM and hold those responsible to account, the Committee to Protect Journalists said today.

...

He told CPJ that recent threatening calls have explicitly demanded that the station halt that program. He said the threats also stem from the station's general commitment to "give a voice to the people."

The station is an affiliate of the U.S. Congress-funded broadcaster **Voice of America**, and broadcasts VOA news bulletins daily, according to Cassamá, who also works as a VOA correspondent.

In June, armed men attacked and robbed Serifo Camara, an editor with Radio Capital FM, as he left the station following the 11 p.m. news broadcast, Cassamá told CPJ, adding that he

believed it was reprisal for the station's reporting and the incident was reported to the judicial police.

Bridget Ann Serchak, Voice of America's director of public relations, told CPJ by email that the outlet had no evidence to suggest Radio Capital FM's broadcast of VOA content factored in the attack.

CPJ - <https://cpj.org/2020/08/guinea-bissau-broadcaster-radio-capital-fm-vandalized/>

From: (b) (6)
To: Oanh Tran; Marie Lennon; David Kligerman; Grant Turner; Terry Balazs; Shawn Powers; (b) (6); Jeffrey Shapiro; (b) (6); Lillian Cheng; (b) (6); Gary Thatcher; (b) (6); Public Relations; (b) (6); James Reeves; (b) (6); Keli Chao; Diane Cullio; Emily Pauline Newman; Daniel Hanlon; Logan B. McVey; Jonathan Bronitsky; Michael B. Williams; Andre Mendes; (b) (6); Elez Biberaj; VOA Division Directors; (b) (6); USAGM Public Affairs Staff; (b) (6)
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Friday, July 31, 2020 10:42:41 AM

Human Rights Watch, July 30, 2020 2:00PM EDT

[Belarus: Crackdown on Political Activists, Journalists](#)

Arrests, Criminal Charges, Police Beatings Ahead of August 9 Presidential Vote

On July 15, hundreds in Minsk lined up to file complaints about the CEC's refusal to register opposition candidates. After 7 p.m., police started arresting participants. Police violently detained Anton Trafimovich, a reporter with **Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)** covering the event, breaking his nose. Trafimovich told Human Rights Watch that the authorities are pressing charges against him, most likely to justify injuring him.

PRESS RELEASE

[CEO Pack launches investigation into pro-Biden VOA content, U.S. election interference](#)

USAGM.gov, July 30, 2020

Related media coverage:

AP - https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/trump-global-media-chief-probes-voa-video-package-featuring-joe-biden-120073100544_1.html

POLITICO Playbook - <https://www.politico.com/playbook>

POLITICO - <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/07/30/deleted-biden-video-sets-off-a-crisis-at-voice-of-america-388571>

The Sara Carter Show - <https://saraacarter.com/voice-of-america-under-investigation-for-election-interference-after-promoting-a-pro-biden-political-ad/>

VOA News - <https://www.voanews.com/usa/voa-urdu-service-investigated-over-biden-video>

FOX News - <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.foxnews.com/media/taxpayer-funded-voa-sharing-biden-video.amp>

The Epoch Times - https://www.theepochtimes.com/taxpayer-funded-voice-of-america-launches-internal-probe-into-election-ad-for-biden_3445229.html

The Daily Reformer - <https://thedailyreformer.com/taxpayer-funded-voice-of-america-launches-internal-probe-into-election-ad-for-biden/>

RT - <https://www.rt.com/usa/496710-biden-voa-propaganda-investigation/>

Politics

[EPISODE 85.2: A CONVERSATION WITH MICHAEL PACK, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE U.S.](#)

[AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA](#)

LISTEN TO EPISODE

The Bill Walton Show, July 30, 2020

About The Bill Walton Show - <https://thebillwaltonshow.com/about/>

SECURITY COMMENTARY

[‘Severe, Fundamental Security Failures’ in This Federal Agency Need to Be Investigated](#)

Helle Dale / @Helledale

The Daily Signal / Heritage Foundation / July 30, 2020

[The Voice of America's visa conundrum](#)

BY KIM ANDREW ELLIOTT, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR

The Hill, 07/30/20 12:30 PM EDT

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY CONTRIBUTORS ARE THEIR OWN AND NOT THE VIEW OF THE HILL

....

Kim Andrew Elliott is a retired Voice of America audience research analyst and media journalist.

TECHNOLOGY

[Funding fight threatens to halt U.S. internet freedom projects](#)

Millions of dollars meant to support safe communications under authoritarian rule is now at risk, according to an internal email.

By DANIEL LIPPMAN

POLITICO, 07/30/2020 06:13 PM EDT

The **Open Technology Fund**, a digital rights non-profit financed by taxpayers, warned on Thursday that it has been forced to issue “stop-work orders” to more than 80 percent of its active internet freedom projects because it’s being starved of cash by the U.S. government, according to an internal email obtained by POLITICO.

OPINION

[Ensure recent changes at the United States Agency for Global Media support its mission](#)

Washington Examiner, by Rep. Francis Rooney | July 30, 2020 06:30 AM

[RESTORING U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY](#)

USC Center on Public Diplomacy, Jul 29, 2020

by William Rugh, Zachary Shapiro

Opinion: Trump administration puts the U.S., world

Houston Chronicle: Web Edition Articles (TX) - July 24, 2020 July 24, 2020 | Houston Chronicle: Web Edition Articles (TX) | Courtney C. Radsch

Days after Vietnamese journalist Le Anh Hung reported on concerns with the country's new cybersecurity legislation he was arrested and thrown in jail to face charges of "abusing democratic freedoms" and involuntarily admitted to a psychiatric hospital several times. Apparently in Vietnam you must be insane to do independent journalism. Hung is just one of countless journalists working for Voice of America outlets who have been harassed, detained or even killed because of their reporting. Too many of them have had to flee their countries as a result. In some cases, though, they have been able to continue their reporting in the United States working for one of the outlets that make up the U.S. Agency for Global Media. Now the United States is threatening to turn their back on these reporters, putting their visas under review and undermining its reputation for trustworthy reporting in difficult places. The decision to freeze and review all visas for Voice of America journalists follows the dismissal of senior staff and independent boards at the five media outlets under the USAGM and the Open Technology Fund by the newly-appointed CEO Michael Pack. President Donald Trump's strongarm appointment of this politically divisive figure and the actions taken during Pack's first few weeks in the position raise concerns that he intends to change the fundamental direction of the news agencies to focus on promoting the political agenda of the current U.S. administration, in essence becoming propaganda organs similar to the state-run news agencies of China or Russia. The administration's attacks on VOA, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidance to its staff not to speak to VOA and Pack's instruction that VOA increase the prominence of editorials that communicate presidential priorities has done little to allay this anxiety over a more politicized approach that could undermine the federally mandated editorial firewall. Instead, the administration and Pack should protect independent journalism that in many cases has been nothing less than heroic. In China, for example, Radio Free Asia was the first station to report on the mass internment of Uighurs in Xinjiang province, followed by extensive reporting on the massive crackdown and surveillance of the Muslim minority population that has resulted in an estimated 1 million Uighurs held in detention. In Belarus, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty was the first to report on COVID-19 reaching the country, which ranks as one of the most censored in the world. The coverage from VOA, RFA and RFE/RL provides both an example of what a free press looks like, as well as critical information that local outlets could never provide. As such, they are a continuing advertisement for democratic values. They are also essential services during the global coronavirus pandemic, when access to information can literally be a life or death matter. Which is why protecting journalists working for these outlets is so important. I've spoken to several journalists working for these stations over the past few weeks who said they would face serious threats if their visas are not renewed and they were forced to return to their

home countries, but they also fear retaliation by their bosses if they speak out, especially following an internal directive that prohibited anyone from speaking to the press without authorization. Building a reputation for trustworthy news in countries where the people have little access to or experience with a free or independent media takes time and tenacity — the outlet and its journalists must consistently report accurate, important news and they must do so despite the official line or repercussions for doing so. When the media trying to build trust are funded through the U.S. government, the task is Herculean given the natural assumptions of the audience and the lack of exposure to hard hitting, critical or investigative domestic news. Yet outlets like RFA, RFE/RL and VOA enjoy high levels of trust in and aid local understanding according to surveys, while the anti-censorship technologies developed with OT F support have enabled those in restricted media environments to bypass internet censorship and surveillance and securely access up-to-date, accurate reports and content on the coronavirus pandemic and other topics deemed sensitive to censors. The symbiosis between the editorially independent media agencies and the open-source non-profit OT F has helped ensure that American news reaches those who have the fewest choices, which is why OT F's independence is also a critical part of the equation. If American news is no longer perceived as reliable and becomes just another propaganda tool, the journalists who work at those outlets will be at grave risk. It is imperative that Pack and the political appointees he has newly installed to helm the USAGM outlets rigorously adhere to the "firewall" that aims to prevent political interference and actively work to defend and protect the journalists who risk their lives to report the news. At the very least by renewing these visas. These politicized machinations also send a dangerous signal to countries around the world that love nothing more than to accuse journalists for these outlets of being American spies and dismiss their reporting as propaganda. Radsch is an author, journalist and free expression advocate interested in nexus of technology, media and rights. CIT AT ION (APA ST YLE) C. Radsch, C. (2020, July 24). Opinion: T rump administration puts the U.S., world's journalism and reporters at risk. Houston Chronicle: Web Edition Articles (TX). Available from NewsBank: Access World News: <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.proxy.dbri.org/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/17C6D0C8E88FE170>. © Copyrig ht 2020 Houston Chronicle. All rights reserved

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To: Oanh Tran; Marie Lennon; David Kligerman;
Grant Turner; Terry Balazs; Shawn Powers; (b) (6)
(b) (6); Jeffrey Shapiro; (b) (6)
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Bronitsky; Michael B. Williams; Andre Mendes; (b) (6); Elez Biberaj; VOA Division
Directors; (b) (6); USAGM Public Affairs Staff; (b) (6)
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 11:09:47 AM

Press Freedom

[Temporary Visa Reprieve for VOA Thai Journalist](#)

VOA News, By Jessica Jerreat

July 24, 2020 08:30 PM

WASHINGTON - Within 24 hours, Thai journalist Warangkana Chomchuen went from arranging virtual farewells with friends and colleagues and finalizing plans to leave the U.S. with her wife and cat, to hearing she could continue working in the U.S. for at least 30 days.

In a last-minute reprieve, the State Department stepped in and granted a special extension to Chomchuen's J-1 visa that means the VOA Thai service journalist can return to work until August 23, while waiting to hear if the United States Agency for Global Media will approve her renewal application.

The reprieve gives temporary relief to Chomchuen, who worked for NBC News and The Wall Street Journal before leaving Bangkok to join VOA last year. But questions remain about the status of the review of J-1 visas – the entry permit for individuals with unique skills – that USAGM management announced earlier this month.

[VOA visa decision could hobble Venezuela coverage](#)

THE HILL, BY RAFAEL BERNAL - 07/24/20 08:09 PM EDT 31

USA

[USAGM Announces Investigation Into 'Long-term Security Failures'](#)

By VOA News, July 24, 2020 09:46 PM

Office of Management and Budget

Statements of Administration Policy

Statement of Administration Policy on July 23, 2020

[H.R. 7608 – State, Foreign Operations, Agriculture, Rural Development, Interior, Environment,](#)

[Military Construction, and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2021](#)[Statement of Administration Policy on July 21, 2020](#)

U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM). The Administration strongly opposes language under the International Broadcasting Operations heading in title I of the bill, which requires use of USAGM funds to implement a definition contained in section 531 of title 22, Code of Federal Regulations, regarding the statutory firewall contained within the United States International Broadcasting Act of 1994, as amended. This language is unnecessary and redundant, as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of USAGM leads the Agency's journalistic standards policies and is responsible for managing United States international broadcasting. While the ostensible purpose of the language and the regulation it refers to is the protection of journalistic integrity, its practical effect is to preclude the CEO from exercising the authorities provided to the leadership position with strong bipartisan support in 2017. The President has been clear in his support for the Agency, its leader, and the needed reforms to ensure that it carries out USAGM's mission to inform and engage world audiences and Voice of America's mission to represent the United States, its people, and its policies worldwide and to be a reliable and authoritative source of news.

[This Week in Technology + Press Freedom: July 26, 2020](#)

POLICY

By **REPORTERS COMMITTEE FOR FREEDOM OF THE PRESS**, Posted on July 27, 2020

The **U.S. Open Technology Fund**, a government-backed digital rights nonprofit, is [expected to cancel a contract](#) for encryption software that helps residents of repressive countries access U.S. government-funded news sources. OTF usually spends about \$2 million annually for the software, which allows people in countries like Iran to access Voice of America and Radio Free Europe. OTF receives funding from the U.S. Agency for Global Media, which has recently been the focus of concerns about [editorial independence](#) — among other controversies. On July 21, a federal appeals court [issued an emergency injunction](#) blocking the removal of OTF board members.

Related:

Access Now - <https://www.accessnow.org/access-now-joins-amicus-brief-in-defense-of-otf/>
[On the Left: Pity the USA](#)

By Jack Batson

Daily Republic, July 27, 2020

...

Jack Batson is a former member of the Fairfield City Council. Reach him by email at jbatson@prodigy.net.

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POLITICO

[Weekly Cybersecurity](#)

Delivered every Monday by 10 a.m., Weekly Cybersecurity examines the latest news in cybersecurity policy and politics.

By TIM STARKS 07/27/2020 10:00 AM EDT

QUICK BYTES

— **Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty:** [The EU is looking to impose sanctions](#) on China, North Korea and Russia over cyberattacks.

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Bronitsky; Michael B. Williams; Andre Mendes; (b) (6); Elez Biberaj; VOA Division
Directors; (b) (6); USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6)
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Friday, July 24, 2020 11:17:26 AM

[Belarus: Leader Threatens to Expel Media Over Election News](#)

NYT, By The Associated Press

July 23, 2020, 10:47 a.m. ET

MINSK, Belarus — The longtime leader of Belarus warned Thursday that Western media could be expelled from the country over what he described as their “tendentious” coverage of the presidential election next month in which he is seeking a sixth term.

President Alexander Lukashenko, 65 became the first president of Belarus 26 years ago and has remained in office ever since, relentlessly quashing dissent in the ex-Soviet nation and extending his rule through elections that Western observers have criticized as rigged.

Lukashenko singled out two broadcasters for criticism, alleging that “tendentious” reporting by Britain's BBC and the **U.S.-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty** had encouraged riots. He also reproached government officials over the matter.

“Why are you tolerating them?” he asked at a meeting. “It was you who have accredited them here.”

Lukashenko cited massive demonstrations in Kyiv's main Maidan Square that drove Ukraine's Moscow-friendly president from power in 2014.

“No need to wait until the end of the election campaign,” he said. “Expel them if they don't abide by our laws, and call people to go out to the Maidans.”

He also criticized the Belarusian edition of Russian daily newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda in comments that reflected tensions in relations with Belarus' main ally and sponsor, Russia.

The Vyasna rights center has said that 43 journalists have been briefly detained while covering opposition rallies since the start of Belarus' presidential election campaign. A local reporter for RFE/RL had his nose broken by police during his detention.

On Wednesday, more than 200 Belarusian journalists put out a statement urging the

authorities to stop detaining reporters.

"There is just one goal behind the authorities' actions - to scare journalists and to show them and the entire society that laws don't apply in view of supreme political interests," the statement said.

Lukashenko is expected to easily win reelection on Aug. 9 despite the latest opposition protests, which were triggered last week when Belarus election officials barred the president's two main challengers from appearing on the ballot.

But simmering discontent over the country's economic woes has posed a challenge to his rule. Since May, more than 1,000 people have been detained in Belarus for taking part in protests, according to Vyasna.

The Belarusian president has dismissed the coronavirus pandemic as "psychosis" and rejected any lockdown measures, but the economic fallout from the outbreak has badly battered the 9.5-million nation's Soviet-style economy.

The World Bank has forecast that the Belarusian economy will shrink by at least 4% this year, the largest decline in a quarter-century.

Related:

Belta - <https://eng.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-cracks-down-on-destructive-appeals-in-mass-media-131966-2020/>

New Europe - <https://www.neweurope.eu/article/belarus-lukashenko-threatens-to-expel-foreign-media-over-critical-election-coverage/>

The Moscow Times - <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/07/24/belarus-lukashenko-threatens-to-kick-out-foreign-press-over-protest-coverage-a70965>

Communal News - <https://communalnews.com/belarus-court-eliminates-rivals-lukashenko-blasts-media/>

[Top brands urged to ditch suppliers 'implicated in Uighur forced labour'](#)

Tom Cheshire, Asia correspondent

Sky News, 23 July 2020

Mamatjan Juma, a journalist at Radio Free Asia based in Washington DC, told Sky News that one of his brothers was in a "forced labour facility" in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang.

"Right now he's suffering low pay, low wages - if there's any wages in one of those forced

labour facilities," Mr Juma said.

"Recently I was told that he's making earphones. I don't know if these earphones that I'm using are made by my brother. And he's also making garments and flags."

"My brother doesn't have any freedom to leave. He cannot leave anytime he wants to. They are only allowed to leave whenever the officials in those factories allow them to leave."

Mr Juma said many of the re-education centres were "being transformed into labour camps. So basically the camp inmates became factory workers."

[USAGM CEO Pack announces investigation into long-term security failures](#)

USAGM.gov, July 23, 2020

U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) CEO Michael Pack has issued the following statement:

Legal Issues

[U.S. Internet freedom group alleges harassment by Trump administration continues despite thwarted takeover](#)

Washington Post, By Spencer S. Hsu

July 24, 2020 at 7:00 AM EDT

Leaders of the Open Technology Fund accused the Trump administration Thursday of continuing a [campaign](#) to intimidate it despite a federal appeals court order this week to stop an unwanted takeover of the U.S. Internet freedom organization.

In a court filing Wednesday night and a letter Thursday to the Justice Department, the fund said the top lawyer for a U.S. media agency that provides grants to the group questioned and appeared to record one of its executives during a snap inspection of its offices.

On Wednesday, the lawyer — Mona Namdar, acting vice president for legal matters of the U.S. Agency for Global Media — also allegedly inquired about the citizenship status of the fund's workers and contractors, the group said in objecting to the actions. The query came weeks after the agency [ousted the board and leadership](#) of Voice of America, a sister agency, and refused to extend the visas of international journalists working for it.

The fund said Namdar sought the visit Tuesday, the day a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit blocked similar staffing changes sought by the agency over

the fund. The court said the Agency for Global Media appeared to have no authority to appoint or control the fund's board members or operations.

"These latest actions by the USAGM are extremely troubling, particularly coming just one day after the court's order," wrote attorney Deepak Gupta, who represents the fund and four board members who filed suit. "We hope that the government will decide to stop escalating its efforts to take over the OTF while this case is pending."

[Appeals court blocks Trump appointee Michael Pack's takeover of organization fighting digital censorship and surveillance](#)

The Justice Department declined to comment. A spokesperson for the Agency for Global Media said it and its officials are unable to comment on ongoing litigation.

The dispute marks the latest controversy under Trump's appointee to head the agency, [Michael Pack](#), a conservative filmmaker and associate of former White House chief strategist Stephen K. Bannon.

Since being confirmed June 4, Pack [has fired](#) the top officials and bipartisan board of entities overseen by the agency, which include VOA and four U.S. government-funded news outlets: Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Asia, Middle East Broadcasting Networks and the Open Technology Fund. The fund combats Internet censorship and surveillance by developing technology working with foreign activists, journalists and technology developers.

Critics, including leading Republican senators, have accused Pack of jeopardizing a model cultural export and globally trusted source of news and information sponsored by the United States that has helped undermine oppressive regimes around the world.

Trump and the White House, during Pack's two-year confirmation battle, portrayed Voice of America as an out-of-control news organization that has distributed "[propaganda](#)" favorable to regimes in China and Iran — a claim vigorously disputed by VOA. Pack's aides have complained of "bias and partisanship" and unspecified but "known mismanagement and scandals."

Declining to extend visas at VOA is leading dozens of employees to fear for their jobs and make other plans, threatening production of its many non-English language programs and newscasts, current and former employees said.

In a declaration filed in court, Nathaniel Kretchun, Open Technology Fund vice president of programs, said he found Namdar's inquiries Wednesday "particularly alarming" because some

employees and partners work to advance “free expression of repressive regimes,” and threats to their status could jeopardize their personal safety.

Kretchun said Namdar asked several questions about the size of the fund’s staff, their employment status and U.S. citizenship. He said at one point Namdar “began filming and narrating,” accompanied by USAGM public affairs director Jonathan Bronitsky, who appeared to record the session with his smartphone.

Kretchun said he felt “uncomfortable” because several of Namdar’s questions seemed potentially relevant to the pending lawsuit, he is not a lawyer and the fund had no counsel present. But he said he “had no choice” but to try to answer because Namdar’s email the previous day “appeared to threaten OTF’s grant funding if we did not comply with her inspection or her requests to interview personnel.”

Gupta asked Justice Department civil division appellate attorney H. Thomas Byron in a letter to counsel his agency client to stop taking “inappropriate, escalating actions.”

Gupta asked the government to confirm by Friday that it will preserve any records and evidence of the inspection, channel all litigation-related communication through attorneys handling the case and cease efforts to access the fund’s offices.

Begun as a Radio Free Asia pilot project in 2012, the Open Technology Fund has grown into an independent D.C. nonprofit grantee, incorporated last year and appropriated \$20million by Congress.

The group has funded programs in 60 countries with more than 2 billion people to allow secure access to the Internet and U.S.-sponsored news and information, including through tools such as Signal and Tor, which permit users to encrypt communications and anonymously access the Internet despite government controls. It has also worked to protect journalists, sources and consumers from digital attack and aided researchers and technology developers.

[Voice of America faces loss of international journalists as new overseer lets visas expire](#)
[After departure of Voice of America editors, new Trump-appointed overseer fires heads of four sister organizations](#)
[Undaunted, U.S. global media chief plows ahead with changes](#)

Spencer Hsu

Spencer S. Hsu is an investigative reporter, two-time Pulitzer finalist and national Emmy Award nominee. Hsu has covered homeland security, immigration, Virginia politics and Congress. [Follow](#)

[US court blocks government media chief from replacing board of tech fund](#)

Updated 24 July 2020

Arab News, July 24, 2020, 01:27

RIYADH: A US appeals court has blocked the new head of an American government media organization from appointing his own directors and officers to the board of a non-profit technology fund.

...

In a statement, Cunningham said: “The OTF’s mission to advance internet freedom is essential to protecting human rights and promoting democratic values abroad. Our success is predicated on the expertise of our staff, the support of our community, and the trust of our users.

“Today’s decision has provided much-needed clarity and stability for the OTF and the billions of users around the world who rely on our tools. While the fight is not yet over, this decision empowers the OTF to continue its critical work to provide those living under authoritarian regimes with the technologies and support they need to safely access the internet free from repressive censorship and surveillance,” she added.

...

Despite the ruling being temporary, it does seem to have reinstated the OTF’s previous board while a lawsuit over the matter proceeds in court. **Under the expedited briefing schedule for the case, briefing will conclude in late August with a final decision on the merits expected by early September.**

Related:

South China Morning Post - <https://www.scmp.com/news/world/united-states-canada/article/3094453/donald-trumps-new-head-us-global-media-purges-news>

[Alhurra TV interview with Amb Bob Joseph, Alireza Jafarzadeh on Iran](#)

Latest News in Brief – July 24, 2020

National Council of Resistance of Iran, Written by Hamideh Taati, 24th July 2020

Alhurra TV interview with Amb Bob Joseph, former Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security and Alireza Jafarzadeh, Deputy Director of the Washington Office of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI-US) on Iran. This in lights of the COVID-19 deaths in Iran and the increasing chaos the regime is facing as well as protests engulfing all over the country. Explosions in Natanz and other military facilities has raised questions about the trouble the Iranian regime is in.

[Congressman Cohen Chairs Helsinki Commission Hearing on Press Freedom in the United States](#)

July 23, 2020 Press Release

“Meanwhile, at the **U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM)**, ...

See Congressman Cohen's opening remarks [here](#).

See the Congressman's questioning of witnesses [here](#).

The witnesses today's hearing were:

- Christiane Amanpour, chief international anchor, CNN and PBS;
- David Kaye, Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, The United Nations;
- Dr. Courtney C. Radsch, advocacy director, Committee to Protect Journalists.

Related:

YubaNet - <https://yubanet.com/world/christiane-amanpour-deeply-troubled-by-us-press-freedom-developments-she-tells-helsinki-commission/>

[The Week](#)

National Review By NR EDITORS

July 23, 2020 9:37 AM

- Some 100 foreign nationals work at the **Voice of America**, a crucial part of the operation. They translate reports into their native languages, and they gather news in those languages. (The VOA broadcasts in almost 50 tongues.) According to recent stories in the press, new management will not renew the visas of those foreign employees. This would be a self-inflicted blow to the VOA. Worse, it could expose these men and women to persecution in their native countries — some of whose governments are none too pleased with the work these people have done for us. We hope that consideration of visas will be done with utmost sobriety.

[The Globalist Borg Invents Another 'Fascist' to Hunt: Michael Pack, at Voice of America](#)

By ROBERT REILLY

The Stream, July 23, 2020

...

Robert Reilly was the director of the Voice of America from 2001-2002. He is author, most recently, of America on Trial.

From: (b) (6)
To: Matthew Walsh; Oanh Tran; Marie Lennon; David Kligerman;
Grant Turner; Terry Balazs; Shawn Powers; (b) (6); Jeffrey Shapiro; (b) (6);
(b) (6); Lillian Cheng; (b) (6); Gary Thatcher; (b) (6);
(b) (6); Public Relations; (b) (6); James Reeves; (b) (6);
(b) (6); Keli Chao; Diane Cullio; Emily Pauline Newman; Daniel Hanlon; Logan B. McVey; Jonathan
Bronitsky; Michael B. Williams; Andre Mendes; (b) (6); Elez Biberaj; VOA Division
Directors; (b) (6); USAGM Public Affairs Staff; (b) (6)
Cc: USAGM Public Affairs Staff
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Thursday, July 16, 2020 11:36:42 AM

BBC MONITORING

Report

Tut.by
(https://www...

| Minsk

| Reported

16 Jul 2020 09:18
GMT

| Published

16 Jul 2020 12:09
GMT

Belarus journalist urges criminal case after police 'beating'

BY BBC MONITORING

The Belarusian Investigation Committee will investigate the detention of Radio Liberty journalist Anton Trafimovich, the TUT.by news website has reported.

On 15 July, Trafimovich was filming events outside the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) in Minsk, where hundreds of residents came to file a complaint about the CEC's decision not to register two opposition figures as presidential candidates.

According to TUT.by, he was detained by seven riot police members who did not explain the reason for his detention.

Trafimovich said that he was punched in the nose and brutally brought inside a police van where he was told to stand on his knees even though there was a place to sit. According to the journalist, he was handcuffed and told to look down at all times. "I was bleeding, but the police did not react to this," he said.

Trafimovich added that the police were aware that he is a journalist because he had a badge on him and repeatedly told them that he works for the media.

He was later released without any explanation and went to hospital to get a certificate that he had got injuries.

"I explained at the hospital that I had been beaten during the detention. In such cases, doctors themselves report the incident to the police. Today I received a call from the Maskowski police department informing me that the materials had been handed over to the Investigation Committee. I also plan to file a complaint in order to launch a criminal case," the website quoted Trafimovich as saying.

TUT.by quoted lawyer Aleh Aheyew as saying that in Trafimovich's case, the police committed a crime as it prevented a journalist from performing his professional duties.

Meanwhile, the press secretary of the Interior Ministry's main directorate, Natallya Hanusevich, said that Trafimovich "disobeyed the lawful demands of the police" and "got his injuries during an act of disobedience".

SOURCE: TUT.BY ([HTTPS://WWW.TUT.BY](https://www.tut.by)), MINSK, IN RUSSIAN 0918 GMT 16 JUL 20

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Standing Up? Belarus Ahead of the Presidential Election

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.- [\[on demand video\]](#)

Speakers:

....

Kastus Lashkevich, *Managing Editor, Belarus Service, Radio Free Europe / Radio*

REPORTS

Reporters Without Borders, July 15, 2020

[US - RSF concerned that visa review could force dozens of Voice of America journalists to leave the United States](#)

Visa non-renewals at Voice of America raise concerns over editorial independence

[Visa non-renewals at Voice of America raise concerns over editorial independence](#)

Efforts to interfere with the work of journalists at Voice of America, other broadcasters could trigger basic First Amendment protections.

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, By GABE ROTTMAN Posted on July 15, 2020

Press Freedom

[US-Backed Internet Freedom Organization Faces Disruption](#)

VOA News, By Michelle Quinn

July 16, 2020 02:55 AM

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FAIR - <https://fair.org/home/for-us-corporate-media-not-intervening-in-chinese-politics-is-journalistically-suspect/>

POLITICO

[POLITICO China Watcher](#)

What's next in U.S.-China relations.

By DAVID WERTIME 07/16/2020 08:48 AM EDT

Defunding the Department of Soft Power: The Trump-appointed head of the U.S. Agency for Global Media **Michael Pack** [fired](#) the head of Radio Free Asia, **Bay Fang**, last week, and on the same day [announced](#) foreign journalists at RFA, Voice of America, and other U.S. outlets under its control will not get their visas extended. The taxpayer-funded outlets have drawn accolades for their hard-hitting journalism on China, including reporting and cataloging human rights abuses there with more persistence than many profit-making outlets. Many of their journalists hail from overseas, and have often done reporting that could put them in danger in their home countries.

[pls. see full tweets in original article]

[PostEverything](#)

[The beclowning of the executive branch during a pandemic](#)

No big deal, just the deconstruction of the American state

By **[Daniel W. Drezner](#)**

Daniel W. Drezner is a professor of international politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and a regular contributor to [PostEverything](#).

Washington Post, July 16, 2020 at 7:00 AM EDT

One of the problems with being inundated with waves of executive branch incompetence is that ordinary citizens and outside observers become inured to it.

To be clear, this does not imply public acceptance of the incompetence — the [polling is clear](#) that Americans are [sick and tired](#) of the United States winning the coronavirus infection race and not in the good way. What it means is that the waves of calamity run so regular and so deep that it is truly impossible to keep up with everything.

The hard-working staff here at Spoiler Alerts has an occasional feature of how the Trump

White House is [beclowning](#) the federal government. It's time for an update of the omnishambles.

The most appropriate place to start is in the White House's continuing placement of D-listers into the federal government. On Wednesday, the White House [announced](#) that Trump intended to nominate [Everyone's Favorite PhD](#), Sebastian Gorka, to serve on the [National Security Education Board](#). Gorka's qualifications for this seat are [dubious at best](#), but the most insane part of this is that it is a four-year term.

Gorka's persuasive abilities are nonexistent, so his actual effect on, well, anything of substance will be minimal. Still, one must pity the other members of that board for having to deal with this buffoon until 2023.

Gorka is a joke. Trump's new head of the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), Michael Pack, has taken less amusing actions, however. Pack, a Stephen K. Bannon partner, oversees Voice of America and other USAGM media outlets that broadcast overseas.

Since the GOP-controlled Senate approved his appointment in [a party-line vote last month under murky circumstances](#), Pack has been busy. He [fired the directors](#) of four of the media outlets under his control, leading to [bipartisan](#) outrage on Capitol Hill. This has not deterred Pack in the slightest, as he has [continued to fire a bevy of editors and governing board members](#).

[According to NPR](#), "Dozens of foreign nationals working as journalists in the U.S. for Voice of America, the federal government's international broadcaster, will not have their visas extended once they expire." Pack seems [super-eager not to renew these visas](#) either. As The Post [noted in an editorial](#) last week, this move could "put the current VOA foreign employees in danger, if they are forced to return to countries whose regimes disapprove of VOA reports. ... Mr. Pack's actions could put the personal security of dozens of journalists at risk, along with the reputation and integrity of the VOA itself." Pack is, alas, not nearly as funny as Gorka. Perhaps Pack is simply trying to follow the lead of Ivanka Trump, the White House staffer who rolled out a new White House employment initiative telling unemployed workers to "find something new." As my Post colleague [Hamza Shaban reported](#), asking the president's daughter to be the point person on this "was swiftly derided on social media as 'clueless' and 'tone-deaf' given the pandemic, recession and Trump's own familial employment history." Ivanka Trump successfully moved on from that fiasco to an entirely new fiasco:

Chris Jansing	
@ChrisJansing	
Senior advisor to the President endorsing a product - using the company's own advertising line. Ethics rules do not allow it - and pretty much unimaginable in	

previous administrations.

Ivanka Trump

@IvankaTrump

If it's Goya, it has

862 people are Tweeting about

Ivanka is a joke; Peter Navarro is a more malevolent joke. Inspired by a futile [Trump-inspired](#) White House effort to bring Anthony S. Fauci down a peg or two, the White House trade adviser ill-advisedly [wrote a USA Today op-ed](#) that claimed the National Institutes of Health doctor “has been wrong about everything I have interacted with him on.” Readers will be shocked to hear that the man who [cannot negotiate his way out of any trade conflict](#) was [a bit fact-challenged](#) in his argument.

If [this is what Navarro thinks is right](#), then I will take Fauci being wrong every day of the week and twice on Sundays. Indeed, the op-ed was so absurdly over-the-top that it actually forced the White House to walk it back:

Alyssa Farah

@Alyssafarah

The Peter Navarro op-ed didn't go through normal White House clearance processes and is the opinion of Peter alone. [@realDonaldTrump](#) values the expertise of the medical professionals advising his Administration.

8:25 AM · Jul 15, 2020

5K

16.6K people are Tweeting about

Trump's staffing decisions are bad, but his policy decisions are nothing short of baffling. On Tuesday, Immigration and Customs Enforcement [rescinded a rule](#) it had issued just a week earlier that would have prohibited foreign students from staying in the country if their courses had been online only. This was a stupid and capricious rule to issue in the first place and was immediately met with [lawsuits](#). Even the Trump administration seemed to realize that it had screwed up. It will still [do damage](#), however.

The administration's inept handling of covid-19 continues unabated. There are [international tensions](#) to be sure, but as the number of infections continues to mushroom, the administration's response has been to ... rejigger the control over data. According to the [New York Times's Sheryl Gay Stolberg](#):

The Trump administration has ordered hospitals to bypass the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and send all Covid-19 patient information to a central database in Washington beginning on Wednesday. The move has alarmed health experts who fear the data will be politicized or withheld from the public. ...

Officials say the change will streamline data gathering and assist the White House coronavirus task force in allocating scarce supplies like personal protective gear and remdesivir, the first drug shown to be effective against the virus. But the Health and Human Services database that will receive new information is not open to the public, which could affect the work of scores of researchers, modelers and health officials who rely on C.D.C. data to make projections and crucial decisions. ...

Public health experts have long expressed concerns that the Trump administration is politicizing science and undermining its health experts, in particular the C.D.C.; four of the agency's former directors, spanning both Republican and Democratic administrations, said as much in an opinion piece published Tuesday in The Washington Post. The data collection shift reinforced those fears.

If you read the whole thing, you will see that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is far from perfect in its data collection. The Trump administration has generated [zero trust](#) in its ability to do anything in a nonpartisan fashion, however. It seems difficult to interpret this as anything but a political move to remove transparency from politically salient information. There's more — the [slow-motion destruction of the Postal Service](#), the [complete lack of preparedness](#) for another pandemic and the general [erosion of America's standing in the world](#). But another 2,000 words on this will be an exercise in the law of diminishing marginal returns. It is instead worth remembering that all of this [incompetence and malfeasance starts with the president](#).

Exhibit A of where the executive branch is under this president was on display Tuesday, when Trump gave [a White House news conference](#) that, as [the New York Times's Peter Baker noted](#), called some to question the president's mental faculties:

What followed instead was an hour of presidential stream of consciousness as Mr. Trump drifted seemingly at random from one topic to another, often in the same run-on sentence. Even for a president who rarely sticks to the script and wanders from thought to thought, it was one of the most rambling performances of his presidency.

He weighed in on China and the coronavirus and the Paris climate change accord and crumbling highways. And then China again and military spending and then China again and then the coronavirus again. And the economy and energy taxes and trade with Europe and illegal immigration and his friendship with Mexico's president. And the coronavirus again and then immigration again and crime in Chicago and the death penalty and back to climate change and education and historical statues. And more.

"We could go on for days," he said at one point, and it sounded plausible.

There is a lot going on in the rest of the world, and I am sick and tired of writing about the Trump administration's [serial incompetence](#).

In theory, this comes to an end in January. My concern is that what started as [the erosion of the American state](#) in 2017 is accelerating into its irreversible destruction.

With this much beclowning, six months feels like an eternity.

[Daniel Drezner](#)

Daniel W. Drezner is a professor of international politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and a regular contributor to PostEverything. [Follow](#)

OF INTEREST:

Management

[Senate Democrat Asks Agencies for Their Reopening Plans](#)

Sen. Gary Peters, D-Mich., wants to ensure employees are protected from the novel coronavirus upon return.

Government Executive, July 15, 2020 04:22 PM ET

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To: Matthew Walsh; Oanh Tran; Marie Lennon; David Kligerman; Grant Turner; Terry Balazs; Shawn Powers; (b) (6); Jeffrey Shapiro; (b) (6); Lillian Cheng; (b) (6); Gary Thatcher; (b) (6); Public Relations; (b) (6); James Reeves; (b) (6); Keli Chao; Diane Cullio; Emily Pauline Newman; Daniel Hanlon; Logan B. McVey; Jonathan Bronitsky; Michael B. Williams; Andre Mendes; (b) (6); Elez Biberaj; VOA Division Directors; (b) (6); USAGM Public Affairs Staff; (b) (6)
Cc: USAGM Public Affairs Staff
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 10:19:13 AM

[Supreme Court Upholds Retrial Verdict for Journalists](#)

Cambodiness.com, Phoung Vantha 15/07/2020 6:15 PM

Two former Radio Free Asia journalists and one fixer for a documentary produced by Russia Today will have to endure retrials in accordance with verdicts handed down by the Supreme Court.

PHNOM PENH--The Supreme Court on the morning of July 15 upheld the decision of the Court of Appeals that ruled for re-investigation against two former **Radio Free Asia journalists Uon Chhin and Yeang Sothearin**. The two were initially accused of “illegally gathering information for a foreign source” in November 2017, but as the investigation wore on, they were also charged with the “production of pornography” in March 2018.

Yeang Sothearin said that the Supreme Court's decision was protracted time and again because the court investigation already took three years. He isn't able to travel to his home town in Kampuchea Krom, as his passport still in court—even when members of his family passed away.

He said that his life has been deeply affected by his career as a journalist and the court's prolonged investigation has limited his freedom of expression while having a profound impact on his personal life.

“I'm working with a foreign media organization, but I can't write in deeper articles, or talk about sensitive issues, because I'm concerned about myself and my workplace as my case is still in the court's hands, so the articles I write are simple articles,” he said. “I can't express my ideas on Facebook.”

He urged the court to accelerate their cases as soon as possible.

[During “Summer of Unfreedom”, Russian journalist awarded CPJ Press Freedom Award](#)

International Observatory Human Rights, 14 July 2020

By Sofia Svensson

Yesterday, 13 July, the Committee to Protect Journalists announced it will honour four courageous journalists with the 2020 International Press Freedom Awards, among them **Svetlana Prokopyeva** from Russia. The announcement came just a day after a Russian court found her guilty of “justifying terrorism” in a controversial case widely criticised as an attack on freedom of speech.

The Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) journalist has maintained her innocence

throughout the trial and described the case as an attempt to “assassinate freedom of speech” in Russia.

“Svetlana’s conviction means that there is no presumption of innocence, no protections for journalists against the brute force of the state,” said RFE/RL acting President Daisy Sindelar.

[Trump's broadcasting agency chief not extending visas for foreign journalists amid sweeping changes](#)

Michael Pack says he's pursuing "bold and meaningful" changes.

By Conor Finnegan

ABC News, July 15, 2020, 5:07 AM

[Massachusetts Democrat calls for Voice of America chief to resign](#)

The Hill, By Rafael Bernal - 07/14/20 05:34 PM EDT

Related:

(Press Release), Kennedy.house.gov - <https://kenedy.house.gov/newsroom/press-releases/kenedy-demands-michael-packs-resignation>

[Firings at U.S. non-profit spark concern among digital rights activists](#)

By Thomson Reuters Foundation

July 15, 2020

[Turmoil at U.S. Agency for Global Media Undermines Information Policy for North Korea](#)

Written By Robert R. King Senior Adviser (Non-resident), Korea Chair

CSIS Newsletter, July 14, 2020

...

Ambassador Robert R. King is a senior adviser in the Office of the Korea Chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. Previously, Ambassador King served as special envoy for North Korean human rights issues at the U.S. Department of State from November 2009 to January 2017.

Opinion

[The White House could be turning independent Voice of America into Trump TV](#) | Trudy Rubin

The Philadelphia Inquirer, July 14, 2020

Trudy Rubin | @trudyrubin | trubin@inquirer.com

Opinions

[The credibility gap between Mike Pompeo's pronouncements and Trump's reality](#)

Opinion by Max Boot

Columnist

Washington Post, July 14, 2020 at 4:55 PM EDT

The most important qualifications for service in the senior ranks of the Trump administration are a total lack of self-awareness, utter shamelessness and a cynical contempt for the truth. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is thus the perfect person to serve as President Trump's chief diplomat. His Twitter feed is a font of unintended humor; it would be funny if it weren't so appalling. Reading Pompeo's tweets, I keep wondering: How can he say these things with a straight — nay, scowling — face?

July 13: “The [People's Republic of China] has no legal grounds to impose its will on the region and claim resources off the coasts of Southeast Asian states.” Trump has often said he wants to [seize Iraqi and Syrian oil](#).

July 12: “The [Chinese Communist Party] has an enormous credibility problem.” Trump has made more than [20,000 false or misleading statements](#), and Pompeo has his own [credibility gap](#). For example, he pretended not to have been a participant in Trump's infamous phone call with Ukraine's president, and he defamed NPR reporter Mary Louise Kelly after she asked him a question he didn't like.

July 10: “We welcome Germany's [European Union] and UN Security Council presidencies and look forward to working closely with Germany to address global challenges at a critical time for the West.” Trump is an avowed enemy of globalism who regularly trashes our allies, including [Germany](#). He announced his [intention to withdraw](#) one-third of the U.S. troops stationed in Germany in a fit of pique with Chancellor Angela Merkel.

June 26: “This is all about whether Iran is honoring its own legally binding safeguards obligations. If Iran fails to cooperate with its [International Atomic Energy Agency] obligations, the international community must be prepared to take further action.” You would never know Trump was the one who withdrew from the nuclear deal, not Iran. This is only one of many international obligations — including the Paris Climate Agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the [Open Skies treaty](#), the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the World Health Organization — that Trump has abandoned.

June 26: “On the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, we honor and support victims and survivors of torture around the world. The U.S. is committed to using all available tools to promote accountability for those who engage in these abhorrent practices.” Trump, who has often expressed his [support for torture](#), is [sanctioning the International Criminal](#)

[Court](#), which prosecutes torturers, and has tried to closed America's doors to [asylum seekers](#), including victims of torture. Moreover, the president promotes human rights abuses at home by sending security forces to attack [unarmed demonstrators](#), threatening to [shoot looters](#), [pardoning war criminals](#), and encouraging cops to [rough up suspects](#).

June 25: "The [U.S.-Republic of Korea] alliance was formed in the crucible of war, and our bond remains ironclad in the defense of peace and security." Former national security adviser John Bolton revealed in his book "[The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir](#)" that Trump [does not understand](#) why the United States fought the Korean War or has stationed troops in South Korea ever since. Trump has now caused [a fissure with South Korea](#) by stopping U.S.-South Korea military exercises without consulting Seoul and by demanding that South Korea pay \$5 billion a year for the cost of stationing U.S. troops there — which would allow Washington to turn a profit.

June 23: "Whether it's freedom for the people of Hong Kong, human rights for the Romyingya, all across the world, @realDonaldTrump has understood that it's important to be a true beacon for freedom and liberty and human rights around the globe." According to Bolton, Trump told Chinese leader Xi Jinping that he approved of China's prison camps for the Uighurs. That's in character for a president who [supported](#) the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre ("That shows you the power of strength").

June 21: "We . . . believe the Chinese people deserve the truth, not propaganda." Trump's appointee to run the U.S. Agency for Global Media is [purging professional journalists](#) in an apparent bid to turn hallowed organizations such as Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty into pro-Trump propaganda organs.

June 14: "My best wishes to all soldiers and Army veterans at home and abroad on the occasion of the @USArmy's 245th Birthday! May we continue to live the values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage." Is there anyone whose behavior is more at odds with these values than the commander in chief? Pompeo hasn't exemplified those values, either. He has placed loyalty to Trump above loyalty to the country — hence his unwillingness to protect [Marie Yovanovitch](#), then the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, from the president's political goon squad.

And that's only one month's worth of tweets. You can find more hypocrisy and howlers the longer you look.

Most of the sentiments Pompeo expresses would be anodyne coming from any other administration but are risible from this one. Does he know who he works for? He acts as though someone else is president — Barack Obama perhaps? That makes U.S. diplomacy nearly worthless, because the whole world can see the Grand Canyon-size gap between

Pompeo's rhetoric and Trump's actions and beliefs. U.S. credibility has become a joke, and Pompeo keeps producing more punchlines.

[Disloyal PTI members should be hanged: Faisal Vawda](#)

SAMAA | Nadeem Malik Live - Posted: Jul 15, 2020 | Last Updated: 4 hours ago

Ranjha claimed some PTI representatives were looking to join other parties and contest elections for them in the next general election. He, however, also refused to mention any names.

A few weeks back, [Fawad Chaudhry's interview to Voice of America](#) angered the prime minister and other senior PTI leaders angry.

Chaudhry had claimed that there are rifts between Jahangir Tareen, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Planning and Development Minister Asad Umar.

"As soon as the PTI government was formed, quarrels among Qureshi, Umar and Tareen began. Tareen used his influence to get Umar removed from the cabinet and later Umar got Tareen out," said Chaudhry.

However, [Qureshi denied](#) having a bad relationship with any party mate.

On July 4, [Railways Minister Sheikh Rasheed asked](#) members of the PTI not to discuss their personal matters before the media.

"I can only request, since I don't have the authority to restrict them, to not to wash their dirty linen in public," Rasheed said while addressing a press conference at the Railways Headquarters in Lahore.

[Shabaab tries to assassinate top general in Somalia](#)

Long War Journal, By Caleb Weiss | July 15, 2020 | weiss.caleb2@gmail.com |

@Weissenberg7 Earlier this week, Shabaab, al Qaeda's branch in East Africa, attempted to assassinate Somalia's top general in Mogadishu in a suicide bombing. The attack is the latest in a series of strikes against Somali government officials across the country in recent months.

On Monday, Somali General Odowaa Yusef Rageh, the country's Chief of Defense Forces, was targeted in a suicide car bombing in Mogadishu. **As confirmed by Harun Maruf of Voice of America, Rageh's convoy [was targeted as it left Somalia's Ministry of Defense](#).**

[Aide Posts Cartoon Mocking Fauci as White House Denies Undermining Him](#)

Dan Scavino, one of the president's closest advisers, shared the cartoon by Ben Garrison, an

alt-right artist who has been criticized for anti-Semitic imagery.

NYT, By Katie Rogers

July 14, 2020, 1:21 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON — White House officials this week have denied trying [to undermine](#) Dr.

Anthony S. Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert, for his stark analysis of the coronavirus pandemic.

But [Dan Scavino](#), the White House deputy chief of staff for communications, undercut that message by posting a cartoon mocking Dr. Fauci by an artist whose work has been criticized for its anti-Semitic imagery.

Mr. Scavino on Sunday posted on Facebook a rendering of Dr. Fauci that likened him to a faucet drowning Uncle Sam — in the case, representing the economy — with water drops labeled with mock public health warnings considered antithetical to White House policy: "Schools stay closed this fall!" "Indefinite lockdown!" "Shut up and obey!"

The post from Mr. Scavino, one of Mr. Trump's most trusted advisers, is another example of the Trump administration treating Dr. Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases as another political opponent, though Mr. Scavino refers to him as a colleague.

"Sorry, Dr. Faucet!" Mr. Scavino wrote in a caption accompanying the post. "At least you know if I'm going to disagree with a colleague, such as yourself, it's done publicly — and not cowardly, behind journalists with leaks. See you tomorrow!"

It also contained errors: Dr. Fauci has publicly said he favors getting children back to school but that decisions should be made by taking into account the level of coronavirus cases in each district into account, and has said he is against more widespread lockdowns after pushing for an extensive one earlier this year.



The cartoon posted by Mr. Scavino was drawn by the artist Ben Garrison, whose work is often promoted by alt-right figures and trolls. Last year, Mr. Garrison was disinvited from a White House gathering of the president's social media fans because his [work](#) contains anti-Semitic messaging.

Mr. Scavino posted the cartoon a day after The Washington Post published an [article](#) detailing how officials had kept Dr. Fauci from television interviews and, in their behind-the-scenes communications with reporters, [accused him](#) of making several false statements.

When asked on Monday if White House aides were engaged in campaign-style opposition research against Dr. Fauci, Kayleigh McEnany, the White House press secretary, said that the White House had simply been responding to questions from reporters.

On Tuesday, the White House declined to comment on [Mr. Scavino's post](#), or whether it was a reflection of Mr. Trump's views on Dr. Fauci, but one senior official praised him for putting his

name to the post.

Mr. Scavino, Mr. Trump's former golf caddy who has been by the president's side since the 2016 campaign, is one of the few aides who has earned Mr. Trump's confidence. From his desk within shouting distance of the Oval Office, Mr. Scavino often workshops social media posts with the president, and presents Mr. Trump with ideas surfaced from the administration's broader universe of alt-right meme creators, cartoonists and trolls.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Mr. Scavino has used his sizable social media platform to enter into controversies surrounding the White House, including in April, when he accused [Voice of America](#) of promoting Chinese propaganda.

In the past, Mr. Trump has also been criticized for sharing social media posts critical of Dr. Fauci, including one that called for his firing, but on Monday, Mr. Trump said he liked Dr. Fauci "personally" though he did not always agree with him.

[Dr. Fauci visited the White House on Monday](#) to meet with Mark Meadows, the White House chief of staff, but it is unclear if he encountered Mr. Trump or Mr. Scavino, whose office is adjacent to the Oval Office.

OF INTEREST:

[POLITICO Playbook](#), By JAKE SHERMAN and ANNA PALMER 07/15/2020 06:10 AM EDT

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, we are **78 DAYS** ahead of the government running out of money....

...

TRANSITIONS --

... Former Rep. **Jane Harman** (D-Calif.) announced she will step down as president and CEO of the Wilson Center when her contract expires in February. ...

[Data journalists describe challenges of reporting on the true toll of COVID-19](#)

CPJ, By Rebecca Redelmeier/**CPJ Audience Engagement Associate** and Coral N. Negrón Almodóvar/**CPJ Patti Birch Fellow for Data Journalism** on July 14, 2020 4:44 PM EDT

[New York Times moving some staff out of Hong Kong as security law brings media chill](#)

By James Griffiths, **CNN Business**

Updated 3:14 AM ET, Wed July 15, 2020

Multiple media organizations in the city, including the Times, are experiencing delays in

getting new visas, sources with knowledge of the situation said. It is unclear whether this is as a result of the new law, or due to other circumstances such as the continuing coronavirus pandemic.

No other major foreign news organizations have yet to go as far as the Times in preparing to move some operations out of the city, but conversations are ongoing among staff and managers at many outlets.

Multiple employees at the Wall Street Journal said managers had been in preliminary consultations with staff about potential preferences for cities outside of Hong Kong, should they have to move into the future, but there were no immediate plans to do so. AFP, a French government-funded press agency with major operations in Hong Kong, is also having conversations about its future, a source said, though it is committed to staying in the city.

Asked about CNN's position, a spokesperson said there are "no plans to relocate from Hong Kong at this time."

"If our ability to operate there becomes compromised we will of course review that," they added.

From: (b) (6)
To: Matthew Walsh; Oanh Tran; Marie Lennon; David Kligerman;
Grant Turner; Terry Balazs; Shawn Powers; (b) (6); Jeffrey Shapiro; (b) (6);
(b) (6); Lillian Cheng; (b) (6); Gary Thatcher; (b) (6);
(b) (6); Public Relations; (b) (6); James Reeves; (b) (6);
(b) (6); Keli Chao; Diane Cullio; Emily Pauline Newman; Daniel Hanlon; Logan B. McVey; Jonathan
Bronitsky; Michael B. Williams; Andre Mendes; (b) (6); Elez Biberaj; VOA Division
Directors; (b) (6); USAGM Public Affairs Staff; (b) (6)
Cc: USAGM Public Affairs Staff
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 11:02:43 AM

[2020 International Press Freedom Awards](#)

International Press Freedom Awards

CPJ will honor courageous journalists from around the world on Thursday, November 19, 2020.

This year's event will be chaired by Patrick Gaspard, president of Open Society Foundations. The evening will be hosted by Lester Holt of NBC News.

[Press Release](#) | [Video](#)

CPJ's 2020 award winners:

...

Svetlana Prokopyeva, Russia

Prokopyeva is a regional correspondent for the U.S. Congress-funded broadcaster Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Russia, known as Radio Svoboda. In July, she was convicted on terrorism charges in relation to a radio show in which she discussed a suicide bombing. (Photo courtesy Artiom Avanesov)

Reporters Without Borders, July 10, 2020

[Three years after Liu Xiaobo's death, at least ten press freedom defenders at risk of dying in China's prisons](#)

...

According to RSF, at least 114 journalists and press freedom defenders are currently locked away in Chinese jails, some under a life sentence. RSF published a list of ten of them sentenced to heavy prison terms who are in danger of losing their lives if not immediately released.

...

[Zhang Haitao](#), aged 49, Political Commentator

- Media: *Boxun*, **Radio Free Asia**, and **Voice of America**
- City of detention: Shaya (Xinjiang Province).
- Arrest date: June 2015
- Punishment: Nineteen years imprisonment for "inciting subversion of state

power" and "disclosing state secrets abroad" (January 2016).

- Probable cause of arrest: Criticised the Chinese government on social media and in interviews with foreign media.
- Health status: Beaten and forced to wear heavy irons on feet for six months, and denied sustenance. His state of health has been unknown since April 2018

...

China, the world's biggest jailer of journalists, ranks 177th out of 180 countries in [RSF's 2020 World Press Freedom Index](#).

[Voice of America visa review could put journalists at risk](#)

CPJ, July 13, 2020 3:34 PM EDT

Related:

Public Diplomacy Council - <https://www.publicdiplomacycouncil.org/2020/07/13/leading-u-s-members-of-congress-and-media-organizations-support-voa-foreign-journalists-whose-visa-renewals-may-be-at-risk/>

[An Abuse of Power](#)

Martha Bayles

The American Interest, July 13, 2020

The new head of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, ostensibly dedicated to furthering American principles, is now endangering brave journalists who have spent their careers defending them.

...

Published on: July 13, 2020

Martha Bayles teaches humanities at Boston College and is the author of *Through a Screen Darkly: Popular Culture, Public Diplomacy, and America's Image Abroad* (Yale University Press, 2014). She is a contributing editor at *The American Interest*.

[Preserve OTF's integrity](#)

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Toledo Blade, JUL 14, 2020 12:00 AM

[El Sonni says Haftar's conditions to reopen oil ports reveal his foreign agenda](#)

The Libya Observer, July 14, 2020 - 11:41 Written By: Abdulkader Assad

The Libyan ambassador to the UN, Taher El Sonni, said Khalifa Haftar's conditions for reopening oil ports and fields show that he is executing foreign agenda in Libya. El Sonni told **US-based Alhurra TV** on Sunday that Libya had been suffering from foreign intervention since 2011, adding that the way the international community handled Libya had opened doors for a proxy war over the years.

Alhurra in the Arab Press

7-12

[Ealam](#) published an article about **Alhurra's** *Debatable* recent episode, which discussed political assassinations in the [Umayyad dynasty](#).

Mary J. Zoorob

Communications Manager

Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Inc.

News

[Belarus President's Main Rivals Barred From Contesting Election](#)

International Business Times AU, By Tatyana KALINOVSKAYA on July 14 2020 10:44 PM

The Belarusian central electoral commission on Tuesday refused to register the imprisoned main rival to President Alexander Lukashenko as a candidate for the country's presidential election in August.

...

Belarus has seen a turbulent summer of protests and arrests of would-be opposition candidates, with Babaryko seen as the strongest potential opponent.

"The authorities removed the strongest candidates and left the weakest," **Radio Free Europe political analyst Valery Karbalevich told AFP**.

He said that a genuine fight was possible only if the remaining opposition candidates chose a single one of them to stand, to avoid dividing the vote.

"They won't do that. It's been done just in the way that suits the authorities," added.

[Inside the White House, a Gun Industry Lobbyist Delivers for His Former Patrons](#)

The Trump administration lifted a ban on sales of silencers to private overseas buyers that was intended to protect U.S. troops from ambushes. The change was championed by a lawyer for the president who had worked for a firearms trade group.

By Michael LaForgia and Kenneth P. Vogel

NYT, July 13, 2020

Michael B. Williams spent nearly two years helping to run a trade group focused on expanding sales of firearm silencers by American manufacturers.

But try as he might, he could not achieve one of the industry's main goals: overturning a ban on sales to private foreign buyers enacted by the State Department to protect American troops in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Then Mr. Williams joined the Trump administration.

As a White House lawyer, he pushed to overturn the prohibition, raising the issue with influential administration officials and creating pressure within the State Department, according to current and former government officials.

On Friday, the State Department lifted the ban, and a longtime industry goal was realized. The change paved the way for as much as \$250 million a year in possible new overseas sales for companies that Mr. Williams had championed as general counsel of the American Suppressor Association.

His role in pushing to lift the ban, which has not been previously reported, follows a well-established pattern in the Trump administration, with the president handing over policymaking to allies of special interest groups with a stake in those policies. And in this case, Mr. Williams's victory comes for a key constituency as President Trump seeks re-election.

Mr. Trump's cabinet includes a former coal lobbyist [as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency](#), a former lobbyist for the defense contractor Raytheon Technologies [as defense secretary](#), a lobbyist for the auto industry [at the helm of the Energy Department](#) and a former oil and gas lobbyist [as interior secretary](#). Those industries have been sources of funds for Mr. Trump's campaign and committees supporting it.

Mr. Williams's work, though lower-profile, has nevertheless been a boon to another crucial political constituency: the gun lobby, which plays a [leading role in Republican get-out-the-vote efforts](#) and views eliminating silencer restrictions as an emerging issue. It's a subject that has been embraced by the president's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr. — an ally of Mr. Williams's former trade group — as well as by other powerful gun industry groups.

"This is another win for the firearm and suppressor manufacturers by the Trump administration," said Lawrence G. Keane, general counsel for the National Shooting Sports Foundation, in a statement after the ban was lifted Friday.

In an interview, Mr. Keane praised Mr. Williams, saying "he understands the product, obviously, having worked at the American Suppressor Association." That association said it

was “[thrilled](#)” with the ban’s end; the group also dismissed safety concerns, noting that the sales would be regulated by the State Department and that foreign-made silencers were already available for purchase in other countries.

But some in military, diplomatic and arms control circles defended the ban and expressed alarm about its lifting, which was announced Friday afternoon in a little-noticed posting on a State Department website. Although the department’s rules had long permitted selling silencers to foreign governments, they did not allow sales to private companies or individuals, whose use of the devices is more difficult to monitor.

Silencers, or sound suppressors, attach to a firearm’s muzzle and reduce the noise made by gunfire by trapping gas released when a bullet is fired. Sales of suppressors in the United States, which are regulated by federal authorities, have climbed in recent years.

Lincoln P. Bloomfield Jr., who was assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs when the ban was enacted in 2002, said the policy was intended to prevent American equipment from being used against American service members, especially during the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

“Terrorist groups were using garage door openers to blow up U.S. troops; you kind of think twice about what you are exporting,” said Mr. Bloomfield, who added that such dangers still exist today. “Who are you selling these silencers to?” he said. “I sure hope that none of these are aimed at U.S. or allied forces.”

A State Department spokeswoman said the policy change was made to benefit American manufacturers. “U.S. companies should have the same opportunity to compete in the international marketplace as other manufacturers around the world,” the spokeswoman said. She also said that silencers were more readily available in foreign countries now than when the ban was imposed.

The White House did not respond to a request for comment. Mr. Williams declined to comment.

An examination of Mr. Williams’s rise from trade group advocate to West Wing lawyer reveals that White House tumult and turnover created opportunities for him.

After joining Mr. Trump’s campaign in 2016, Mr. Williams, at age 30, became an assistant deputy general counsel at the Office of Management and Budget, then led by Mick Mulvaney. In the spring of 2019, not long after Mr. Mulvaney was [elevated to acting White House chief of staff](#), Mr. Williams joined him as counselor and a deputy assistant to the president. It was from that perch that Mr. Williams began to press the gun issues in earnest, according to the current and former officials, who were not authorized to speak publicly.

While in the White House, Mr. Williams maintained close ties to the suppressor association, which is funded by silencer manufacturers, distributors, retailers and customers. His brother, Knox Williams, started the organization and serves as its president and executive director, and the two have remained in regular contact. “We speak almost every day,” Knox Williams said in an interview.

Mr. Williams, his brother said, did not run afoul of [Trump administration ethics rules](#) that forbid government officials from working on matters affecting their former employers within two years of leaving. But in 2019, he set to work on gun issues without those constraints. He was involved in a successful push to shift responsibility for foreign sales of semiautomatic weapons, including powerful .50-caliber sniper rifles, to the Commerce Department from the State Department — an effort that had been underway since the Obama administration and that had been blocked by Democratic members of Congress over concerns that it would strip away oversight.

Once that was accomplished, Mr. Williams turned to the silencer sales ban, even though in internal discussions Pentagon officials had warned against lifting it. Silencers have become standard-issue among military special operations forces because they offer an advantage in combat, allowing American troops to shoot at an enemy but making it harder for the enemy to determine where the gunfire is coming from. The officials feared that a glut of high-quality silencers overseas might put American forces at a similar disadvantage. Mr. Williams pressed the case anyway.

Knox Williams called the State Department decision a “big victory” for his group but said the association had had no inside advantage in seeking it — though he acknowledged that his brother had played a role. “We work the issues that we work just the same as any other organization does,” he said.

Government watchdog groups, however, said the case raised concerns about special interests gaining remarkable access in the Trump White House.

“When Michael Williams exits through the revolving door to return to the gun industry, I’m sure he will be greeted with open arms,” said Austin Evers, executive director of American Oversight, a government ethics advocacy group that has filed [records requests](#) for Mr.

Williams’s communications with the gun lobby from the White House budget office.

Records obtained by Mr. Evers’s group show that in early 2018, about a year after his arrival at the White House, Mr. Williams was invited by the National Shooting Sports Foundation to [three meetings](#) that another invitee described as being about countering gun control measures after the mass shooting at a high school in Parkland, Fla.

Mr. Keane, the shooting sports foundation’s general counsel, said Mr. Williams did not attend the meetings and had been invited in error. Nevertheless, he said his group communicated with Mr. Williams about the State Department’s silencer policy, and other Second Amendment-related issues. He said Mr. Williams took on what Mr. Keane called the “hook and bullet” portfolio — fishing and hunting issues — at the White House.

A Georgia native and Eagle Scout, Mr. Williams worked as a law clerk for the National Rifle Association before [graduating from George Washington University Law School](#) in 2014. Soon after, he went to work at the American Suppressor Association, which his brother had co-founded three years earlier. Mr. Williams managed the group’s budget, but he also helped draft legislation and lobby lawmakers, his brother said. One of his main issues was the fight to open up sales of silencers to private foreign buyers.

Intent on understanding the reasons for the sales ban, Mr. Williams filed a Freedom of Information Act request for documents from the State Department and then battled the agency over them for more than a year. His association also sought to attack the ban from Capitol Hill, helping to draft and push a bill introduced by Representative Chris Stewart, Republican of Utah, in 2016 that [would have overturned the sales prohibition](#), according to Knox Williams. The bill never got out of committee.

Neither Mr. Williams nor his brother was required to register as a lobbyist at the federal level, his brother said, because they did not spend 20 percent or more of their time lobbying. “We made sure that we were not hitting those thresholds to require us individually to register,” Knox Williams said.

The Williams brothers also tried to influence silencer policies in various states, including in New Hampshire, where both [registered as lobbyists in 2015](#).

After Mr. Trump accepted the Republican nomination in the summer of 2016, their cause got a boost from a prominent figure, Donald Trump Jr.

The candidate’s son, an avid hunter, [recorded a video](#) in September 2016 with Joshua G. Waldron, a founding board member of the suppressor association, expressing support for making silencers easier to buy in the United States.

Mr. Waldron, who founded a company called SilencerCo, tells Mr. Trump in the video “there is no better person than your father to protect our Second Amendment,” and says he wants to “try to get the people that love firearms in our community and our industry” to back the Trump campaign.

The same month, Mr. Williams left the suppressor association to become director of Election Day operations for Mr. Trump’s campaign in North Carolina. He worked as associate counsel on Mr. Trump’s inaugural committee before joining the Office of Management and Budget in January 2017.

He returned to the budget office last month and was detailed to the U.S. Agency for Global Media, operator of the Voice of America broadcasting network and other federally funded media outlets, as Mr. Trump shook up the agency’s leadership, [raising questions about its editorial independence](#).

On Monday Mr. Williams started as principal deputy general counsel at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. A department spokesman did not answer a question about Mr. Williams’s housing policy experience, but called him “a first-rate attorney with immense experience in this administration and in the public policy sphere.”

John Ismay contributed reporting.

Michael LaForgia is an investigative reporter who previously worked for The Tampa Bay Times

and The Palm Beach Post. While in Florida, he twice won the Pulitzer Prize for local reporting.
@laforgia_

Ken Vogel covers the confluence of money, politics and influence from Washington. He is also the author of “Big Money: 2.5 Billion Dollars, One Suspicious Vehicle, and a Pimp — on the Trail of the Ultra-Rich Hijacking American Politics.” @kenvogel • Facebook

Related: Politico PM - <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/playbook-pm>

OF INTEREST:

[US Congress members push for Al Jazeera to register as foreign agent](#)

Arab News, Updated 13 July 2020

Ray Hanania

July 13, 2020, 17:11

CHICAGO: The Qatari-owned satellite news channel, Al Jazeera, is facing renewed pressure to register as a foreign agent in the US under a two-year-old law.

After a year-long push, the US Congress amended the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) in 2018 requiring all foreign media outlets based in America to detail their ties to foreign governments.

The law is part of the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), which was adopted in 1938 to identify Nazi propaganda outlets in the US.

From: (b) (6)
To: Matthew Walsh; Oanh Tran; Marie Lennon; David Kligerman; Grant Turner; Terry Balazs; Shawn Powers; (b) (6); Jeffrey Shapiro; (b) (6); Lillian Cheng; (b) (6); Gary Thatcher; (b) (6); Public Relations; (b) (6); James Reeves; (b) (6); Keli Chao; Diane Cullio; Emily Pauline Newman; Daniel Hanlon; Logan B. McVey; Jonathan Bronitsky; Michael B. Williams; Andre Mendes; (b) (6); Elez Biberaj; VOA Division Directors; (b) (6)
Cc: USAGM Public Affairs Staff
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Monday, July 13, 2020 9:50:35 AM

US & World // News

[Undaunted, US global media chief plows ahead with changes](#)

By MATTHEW LEE, **AP** Diplomatic Writer July 13, 2020 Updated: July 13, 2020 5:05 a.m.

[US broadcast agency to stop renewing visas for foreign journalists](#)

Arab News, Updated 12 July 2020

Zaira Lakhpatwala

July 12, 2020, 14:40

- According to VOA, approximately 76 foreign journalists are facing the possibility that their visas may not be renewed
- The move also affects employees at other USAGM entities

DUBAI: The US Agency for Global Media (USAGM) might not renew visas for foreign journalists working at Voice of America (VOA).

...

A USAGM spokesperson told VOA that the agency was conducting a case-by-case assessment of J-1 renewal applications, and so far none of the journalists seeking J-1 extensions appears to have been rejected outright. The spokesperson added said the visa review is aimed at improving agency management, protecting US national security and ensuring that hiring authorities are not misused.

Media organizations have spoken out against the news. "This reported decision puts the lives of intrepid, free-thinking foreign journalists at risk. Many of these journalists have worked with VOA precisely because it offers them the opportunity to report

[USAGM CEO Defends Firings After Senators Expressed Concerns](#)

Voice of America [via Malaysia Sun]

13 Jul 2020, 21:35 GMT+10

Press Freedom

[Visa Delays Could Hamper VOA News Coverage, Journalists Say](#)

VOA News, By Jessica Jerreat

July 11, 2020 06:16 PM

[Journalism groups call on US media agency to renew foreign journalists' visas](#)

The Hill, By Rafael Bernal - 07/10/20 02:36 PM EDT

In a statement, the National Press Club and its Journalism Institute said USAGM was "placing dozens of journalists under a cloud of uncertainty and threatening not only their job security but their personal safety as well."

[National Press Club and Journalism Institute call on USAGM to renew VOA journalists' visas](#)

National Press Club, July 10, 2020

Lindsay Underwood, lunderwood@press.org

WASHINGTON -- [The National Press Club](#) and the [National Press Club Journalism Institute](#) urge the United States Agency for Global Media and its new executive, Michael Pack, to renew expiring visas for foreign journalists working in the U.S. for Voice of America's international services.

Published on Friday, July 10, 2020

by **Common Dreams**

['An Outrage': Trump-Appointed Head of Global News Agency Won't Extend Visas for Foreign Journalists](#)

"It is appalling that the VOA's new boss could be so reckless about the safety of journalists," said PEN America.

by Julia Conley, staff writer

About: <https://www.commondreams.org/about-us>

[Trump appointee cutting 10 visas for international journalists, may not extend dozens more](#)

By Margaret Brennan, Camilla Schick

July 10, 2020 / 9:36 AM / **CBS News**

Additional coverage:

O'Dwyer's - <https://www.odwyerpr.com/story/public/14562/2020-07-10/media-maneuvers-foxer-shep-smith-resurfaces-at-cnbc.html>

Raw Story - <https://www.rawstory.com/2020/07/the-gop-is-a-suicide-cult/>

The Independent - <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/trump-visa-journalists-voice-of-america-michael-pack-a9613321.html>

Southgate Amateur Radio News - <http://www.southgatearc.org/news/2020/july/us-global-media-agency-seeks-to-kick-out-international-journalists.htm#.Xww3Q25FyUk>

CNN, Updated 7:52 PM ET, Fri July 10, 2020

- <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/10/media/usagm-voice-of-america-visas/index.html>

Columbia Journalism Review

- https://www.cjr.org/the_media_today/joy_reid_msnbc_shep_smith_cnbc.php

Poynter - <https://www.poynter.org/newsletters/2020/dozens-of-foreign-national-voice-of-america-correspondents-wont-have-their-visas-extended/>

Yakima Herald: Letters: https://www.yakimaherald.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-voice-of-america-politicized/article_c869524e-44dc-53b8-86b7-1039e07e311a.html

[Nombramiento de nuevo director interino de Radio y TV Martí provoca polémica](#)

por Mario J. Pentón

El Nuevo Herald, 10 de julio de 2020 03:30 PM , Actualizado 10 de julio de 2020 04:26 PM

[via Google translate/original article contains links]

Appointment of new acting director of Radio and TV Martí provokes controversy

by Mario J. Penton

July 10, 2020 03:30 PM , Updated July 10, 2020 04:26 PM

The appointment of a new interim director of Radio and TV Martí linked to a former White House official has provoked controversy in the corridors of federal broadcasters, facing a \$7 million reduction in his budget proposal for this fiscal year, according to several employees.

The broadcasters have also suffered from a case of coronavirus, which affected the programming aimed at Cuba.

The controversy was sparked by the announcement in late June that lawyer and former investigative reporter Jeffrey Scott Shapiro, ally of former White House chief strata Steve Bannon, would take over Radio and TV Martí, which are funded by the federal government with a budget of \$29 million.

"Everyone knows that he is a custom-appointed director of Trump," one employee said. "The fear is that they want to turn us into a propaganda machine of the administration and let go of our mission, which is to provide Cuba with truthful information," the employee added.

Radio Martí, founded in 1985, and TV Martí in 1990, have as their mission "to bring to Cuba uncensored information" from South Florida, where a large community of Cuban exiles lives.

This effort has been hampered by the recent case of coronavirus.

"A non-federal employee who last worked on the building on Friday, July 3 tested positive for coronavirus," confirmed a spokesman for the U.S. Global Media Agency (USAGM), which is run by The Office of Transmissions to Cuba (OCB), responsible for the broadcasters.

"As a precaution and in accordance with established guidelines and best practices, staff were ordered to work remotely until the facility could be thoroughly disinfected. Some of the programming was temporarily affected," he added.

The existence of broadcasters has been one of the points of friction between the Cuban government and the American government. Cuba demanded that Barack Obama's administration eliminate them during the relationship restoration process.

Broadcasters have been at the center of the public eye after a report commissioned by the federal government that broadcasters were making ineffective propaganda and poor journalism. The last confirmed director, former Mayor Tomás Regalado, resigned following a scandal involving his son, also an employee of the entity, fired for allegedly manipulating a news story.

How the new director was appointed

The federal Senate confirmed the appointment of Michael Pack, a conservative documentary filmmaker, as director of the Global Media Agency, the parent company of Radio and TV Martí, last June. After taking over, Pack fired the directors of several international broadcasters without consulting Congress, including Radio and TV Martí.

To direct Radio and Televisión Martí, Pack appointed Shapiro, who since 2017 was the station's senior advisor. Shapiro is a close ally of Steve Bannon, former Chief White House strategist, according to CNN and Politico sources.

The 47-year-old journalist and lawyer has written for newspapers such as The Washington Times and the Los Angeles Times on issues related to killings and terrorist attacks in the United States and Europe.

"Shapiro had been working in Martí for three years without anyone knowing exactly what his job was. It was supposed to be Martí's liaison to Washington but he never got an exclusive interview or when [former Homeland Security adviser John] Bolton came to Miami," said one station employee who asked not to be identified for fear of reprisals.

A former employee who worked with Shapiro recounted that "his ignorance of the Cuban subject is such that he did not even know that there was a Cuba interest office in Washington since 1977."

"I don't remember anything relevant Scott Shapiro did on Radio and TV Martí beyond his accusations to former director Maria Malule Gonzalez of being an agent of Castro's government," she added.

Shapiro's office did not respond to requests for statements from the New Herald.

Budget reduction

Radio Martí was created by President Ronald Reagan in 1985 in the late Cold War. Congress initially opposed broadcasters, but the White House managed to get a \$6 million budget approved. Over time, Martí Television was created in 1990 and Martinoticias.com, the online page of the stations. The budget reached \$30 million.

For 35 years, Radio Martí has been broadcasting to Cuba and thanks to its work has managed to uncover crimes such as the sinking in 1994 of the March 13 Tugboat by Cuban government forces, where 41 people, 10 of them children, died.

The Martí Television signal, despite multiple efforts and promises, is repeatedly blocked by the island government and can only be seen through satellite dishes, banned in Cuba.

Federal broadcasters are in the process of adjustments to meet this fiscal year's budget, cut by seven million. Radio and Televisión Martí have a workforce of more than 100 federal employees in addition to about 70 contractors.

According to several employees consulted by the New Herald, "most contractors have had their hours reduced for two months."

"It is sad that the most affected have been journalists, which affects the quality of our content. There are employees who do administrative tasks, but who are relatives of exile figures that no one touches," said a contractor for the station.

According to Politico, the cuts are due to the station's funding being held by senators in Congress who are calling for the director of the USAGM to testify about his recent layoffs. Politico says there is concern in Congress about a possible politicization of broadcasters.

For fiscal year 2021, the budget reduction of the two stations is \$13 million, sources knowledgeable of the situation said.

A former agency employee said it "hurts" to see the process of defunding the broadcasters "because at the time they were a conquest of Cuban exile."

"I have mixed feelings because I know many good journalists who work there, but I also know that big mistakes have been made, like when they deceived the federal government by saying that... Martí television would be seen in Cuba," he said.

Follow me on Twitter and Facebook: @MarioJPenton. New Herald reporter Nora Gámez contributed this story.

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The Post's View

Opinion

[Failing to renew VOA foreign staffers' visas would devastate one of its core functions](#)

Opinion by Editorial Board

Washington Post, July 10, 2020 at 1:06 p.m. EDT

MICHAEL PACK, the alt-right filmmaker installed by President Trump to run U.S. foreign broadcasting operations, remains on course to dismantle the independent journalism that has been their calling card. Last month, shortly after taking office as chief executive of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, Mr. Pack summarily fired the top editors of four outlets, including Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty; the two top editors of Voice of America resigned. Now, VOA sources say, Mr. Pack is refusing to renew the visas of foreign-born journalists who are vital to its mission of producing news reports in 47 languages.

Opinion

[War on Trump USAGM Pick Michael Pack Undermines U.S. Battle With China | Opinion](#)

Ben Weingarten , Senior Fellow, London Center for Policy Research

Newsweek, On 7/13/20 at 7:30 AM EDT

Nearly a full term into the Donald Trump presidency, the administration was finally able to fill a little-known but pivotal seat with someone of the president's choosing. The political establishment had worked tirelessly to block the appointment. Its obstruction would continue post-confirmation. The appointee was subjected to an onslaught from Congress, in the courts and in the press. The apparent aim was to undermine him as part of a broader effort to undermine the president's policies.

The continued fight against Michael Pack, the new CEO of the U.S. Agency for Global Media

(USAGM), is a microcosm of the fight of this presidency: to overcome a political establishment unwilling to afford the president the same privileges as his predecessors—including to staff the executive branch with supporters. That is, to overcome a Washington, D.C. hellbent on preventing the peaceful transfer of power.

In so doing, it is the Resistance that has [eviscerated](#) our norms, values and [institutions](#). In its jihad against Mr. Pack, it has done so to the detriment of our national security interests.

USAGM is an essential part of America's arsenal in the War of Ideas. The independent federal agency [oversees](#) the Voice of America (VOA), Office of Cuba Broadcasting and USAGM-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, the Middle East Broadcasting Network (MBN) and Open Technology Fund. We, the American taxpayer, contribute \$800 million annually to [USAGM](#) to "inform, engage and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy." Its outlets faithfully fulfilled this mission during the Cold War. To triumph over today's Communist menace, China, it must do so again.

Enter Michael Pack. Mr. Pack is indisputably [qualified](#) to head USAGM. During his more than 40 year career, he has produced more than a dozen celebrated documentaries appearing on the Public Broadcasting Service on American politics, culture and history, and served in a number of management and editorial capacities in U.S. international broadcasting entities under both Democratic and Republican administrations.

Yet these credentials did not satisfy Senate Democrats, the sole opponents of his [confirmation](#), because of Pack's original sin: He is a patriotic, conservative American who threatens to abide by the governing [Standards & Principles](#) to which USAGM must adhere by law.

The first such [standard](#) is that broadcasts be "consistent with the broad foreign policy objectives of the United States." President Trump is primarily responsible for setting these objectives, and CEO Pack correspondingly must advance them.

This is intolerable for the likes of Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ), the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee who was chiefly responsible for slow-walking Pack's confirmation.

Sen. Menendez engaged in a two-fold line of attack: First try to make Pack radioactive by [highlighting](#) his past brief working relationship with fellow China critic (and Pack supporter) Steve Bannon, and then paint Pack as corrupt.

The purpose of the former was to create a narrative, which the press dutifully pushed, that Pack would be a Trump true-believer—horror of horrors—turning USAGM into "authoritarian" state media. This narrative persists, with publications [slandering](#) Pack, who is Jewish, with

headlines like: "Is Trump putting fascists in charge of the Voice of America?" Such attacks are analogous to those on President Trump's other most-inspired picks, such as [Amb. Richard Grenell](#) and [Attorney General William Barr](#), who were savaged as toadies who would damage the institutions they led. What President Trump's opponents truly loathe are like-minded, competent conservatives serving in his administration.

The latter [line of attack](#) was similarly specious, but also hypocritical and potentially corrupt. Recall that Sen. Menendez was the subject of a [22-count indictment](#) by the Department of Justice (DOJ) concerning an alleged bribery scheme. He purportedly enjoyed lavish vacations on Dr. Salomon Melgen's dime, gifts never cleared nor disclosed, while advocating on Dr. Melgen's behalf with government officials in connection with his over-billing of Medicare payments, businesses interests and desired visas for [his mistresses](#). After the jury in Sen. Menendez's case proved deadlocked, it was [declared a mistrial](#) and the DOJ dropped the case. But Sen. Menendez's colleagues on the Senate Ethics Committee deemed the allegations true, [admonishing](#) him for violating "Senate rules, federal law and applicable standards of conduct." Dr. Melgen would be [sentenced](#) to 17 years in prison for Medicare fraud.

Consider this background, given the seemingly frivolous charges Sen. Menendez leveled at Pack. Two days before Pack was to receive a vote out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. Menendez called for an investigation into Pack's business dealings. The night before the vote, *The Washington Post* revealed that the District of Columbia's attorney general subpoenaed him. The vote was temporarily scuttled. The probe concerned donations to Pack's nonprofit entity that were then paid to his production company in connection with his documentary work—a common structure, according to a [RealClearPolitics](#) report. Sen. Menendez's colleagues were ultimately unconvinced, Pack's nomination proceeded and he prevailed.

Meanwhile, *RealClearPolitics'* Susan Crabtree unearthed that [a member](#) of USAGM's board of governors—a New Jersey-based [major Democratic donor](#)—had gifted \$40,000 to Sen. Menendez's legal defense fund. That board was disbanded by Pack after he was seated. Was it a coincidence, then, that Sen. Menendez tried to kneecap Pack? Will the suddenly-ethical Sen. Menendez and his colleagues seemingly orchestrate such investigatory trickery to sideline future nominees?

On top of disbanding the board, Pack fired the heads of each of the USAGM-funded outlets. This caused a [bipartisan](#) backlash. Sen. Menendez [called for an inspector general investigation](#).

[Sensationalist headlines](#) blaring "Wednesday Night Massacre" reflected the typical anti-Trump media hysteria that no Democratic president would face. Only under President Trump is it verboten for an administrator to administrate.

In interviews, Pack [claimed](#) he was proceeding as he would have had he assumed his position

on schedule, including releasing both Democrats and Republicans in order to avoid any appearance of partisanship.

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia [agreed](#) he was [within his rights](#) to do so.

More importantly, notwithstanding the merits of some of the figures Pack released, such as former MBN head Ambassador Alberto Fernandez, Pack was more than justified to start anew at USAGM, given the [problems](#) ailing it under his President Obama-appointed predecessor.

Setting aside the organization's persistently poor morale and alleged [corruption](#), its greatest issue has arguably been its editorial bias to the detriment of U.S. foreign policy—particularly with respect to [America's greatest adversary](#), China.

As the White House pointed out in April 2020, VOA [parroted Beijing's propaganda](#) regarding the coronavirus pandemic for which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is most [culpable](#).

In May 2019, following Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's [landmark foreign policy speech](#) at the Claremont Institute's 40th Anniversary Gala, VOA appeared to blatantly flout its mission by limiting its coverage of the speech to its Chinese Service, which [omitted](#) Sec. Pompeo's most critical remarks about the CCP.

This came on the heels of the VOA's censoring of an April 2017 interview with CCP dissident-in-exile Guo Wengui. The [interviewer](#), Mandarin Service Chief Sasha Gong, as well as four colleagues, were suspended without pay. Gong and two others were ultimately [fired](#).

This is to say nothing of the VOA's alleged [running](#) of [pro-Iranian propaganda](#).

The White House was right to [assert](#) that the "VOA too often speaks for America's adversaries—not its citizens."

Pack [is changing that](#). He [observes](#):

"China is stepping up its propaganda campaigns. ...And I don't think we're doing as well as we should in the war of ideas, putting our values and our ideas out there—and that is the principal mission of these agencies.

"It's a legal obligation. ...My plan is to bring this agency back to what it was legally required to do."

In a separate interview, he [adds](#):

"We need to get our values out...values and principles...as enshrined in the Declaration and Constitution...that we as a country are dedicated to that are very different from the principles of communist China."

Though [undeterred](#), Pack has come under attack for this position from [The New York Times](#) and [Axios](#) by daring to consider options for breaking through China's "Great Firewall" from sources affiliated with the Falun Gong, victims of brutal CCP persecution. According to a *Times* headline, such a pursuit could "put global internet freedom at risk." *Axios* concluded, "A far-right take-over of an independent U.S. government agency may allow once-fringe ideas promulgated by a controversial religious group to become official policy."

The CCP could not ask for more.

I spent several days with Pack in 2015 while obtaining a Publius Fellowship at the aforementioned Claremont Institute, where he formerly served as president. Consistent with his remarks, Pack demonstrated an ardent belief in America's founding principles—and the imperative to instill them through media.

These sentiments may qualify as subversive in this time of statue-toppling, but they are needed at USAGM.

That presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden has said he would [fire](#) Pack is not only an endorsement of Pack, but an [inadvertent admission](#) of his importance to [countering China](#).

President Trump should be cheered for [pushing](#) an intransigent establishment to seat Pack. The benefits will redound to all Americans.

Ben Weingarten is a senior fellow at the London Center for Policy Research, fellow at the Claremont Institute and senior contributor to The Federalist. He is the author of [American Ingrate: Ilhan Omar and the Progressive-Islamist Takeover of the Democratic Party](#) (Bombardier, 2020). Ben is the founder and CEO of ChangeUp Media LLC, a media consulting and production company. Subscribe to his newsletter at bit.ly/bhwnews, and follow him on Twitter [@bhweingarten](#).

The views expressed in this article are the writer's own.

the media equation

[While America Looks Away, Autocrats Crack Down on Digital News Sites](#)

Independent journalism is on the defensive, from Hungary to Malaysia.

By Ben Smith

NYT, July 12, 2020

Like many American media types, I spent a lot of time last week reading heated arguments about free speech. I was wondering if I,

[too](#), could count myself as a “[veteran of the Twitter wars](#)” when Steven Gan distracted me by telling me about his car.

Mr. Gan, the co-founder and editor in chief of Malaysia’s most important political news site, is leaving his hatchback at home on Monday morning and catching a ride to court with a colleague. That’s because Mr. Gan thinks there’s a good chance he’ll be going straight from the courthouse to jail.

The nominal [charge against him](#) is contempt of court, a charge brought because his site, Malaysiakini, briefly hosted user comments insulting the judiciary. But his real crime, in the eyes of the government, appears to be his years of straightforward journalism, often chronicling the corruption of the faction that recently retook power in Malaysia.

“Power is consolidating power” around the world, said Maria Ressa, the co-founder of the Filipino site Rappler, who has been watching with alarm and sympathy from Manila, across the South China Sea. “By taking out independent news groups, it’s easier for the voice with the loudest megaphone to shape reality.”

Ms. Ressa, who is currently out on bail after a conviction under a new “cyber libel” law, has emerged as perhaps the world’s best spokeswoman for journalism that confronts power. That power, in her case, is the Trump-like Philippines president, Rodrigo Duterte, who [ranted](#) last week about the “bright girls” attacking him and said he was compiling information on Ms. Ressa, in particular.

I first met Ms. Ressa, and Mr. Gan’s co-founder, Premesh Chandran, and a half dozen digital media entrepreneurs from difficult places when I was running BuzzFeed, a high-profile new newsroom. They often came to our gleaming Manhattan headquarters, sat with me at long tables in our cafeteria and asked advice from an American company that was leading a global explosion of digital media outlets.

It quickly became clear that the premise of those conversations was ludicrous. I should have been seeking their advice. They had, on shoestring budgets and in the face of unrestrained government pressure, created the kind of mission-driven, scrappy and successful news sites that American start-ups dreamed of becoming. Malaysiakini, founded back in the long-ago Slate era, the 1990s, built the sort of robust subscription business that almost everyone is now trying to generate. When government attacks cost Rappler a third of its advertising in one month in 2018, it began doing data analysis for businesses to keep itself afloat. The Russian site Meduza started what became a breakout podcast network with a couple of microphones

in a cramped apartment in Riga, Latvia. Its app includes a special setting for users in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, who would otherwise be blocked.

And then there's their physical courage. Mr. Gan could well be in prison by the time you read this. Ms. Ressa is awaiting her appeal. Lina Attalah, the editor in chief of one of Egypt's few remaining independent voices, Mada Masr, was [arrested](#) while interviewing an activist in May and is also out on bail. A Meduza correspondent was held by police in Moscow for two nights on trumped-up drug charges last summer.

"They are the little Gaulish village holding out against Rome," marveled Naresh Fernandes, the editor and co-founder of Scroll, an Indian news site. Scroll, like the Hong Kong Free Press, represents a different strain in the current crisis for independent media — both are digital outlets in countries now rolling back their once-robust free press traditions.

The reporters and editors of this global generation of digital start-ups are, pound for pound, the most impressive journalists in the world. Their high-impact, low-cost model is seen as "the future of journalism in places where investigative or accountability journalism is difficult," says Joel Simon, the executive director of the Committee to Protect Journalists.

The attacks on them are a tribute to their power, to an independence that reflects the best promise of the internet and to the threats they pose to corrupt and autocratic leaders.

But these outlets are now in more danger than ever. Even as they are facing the same advertising challenges from Facebook and Google — and now an economic crisis — that have stalled the growth of American digital media, they are contending with autocrats who increasingly draw their attacks from a common playbook. Many governments around the world are looking to an alternative model in China, which puts tight controls on domestic media and is in the process of imposing its stifling regime on Hong Kong. And digital upstarts aren't the only ones feeling it — in the Philippines on Friday, Congress [voted](#) not to renew the franchise of the country's main broadcaster, and Russia is [pursuing](#) treason charges against a respected former print journalist.

The coronavirus crisis, meanwhile, has given governments from Thailand to Cambodia to Hungary an excuse to crack down on independent media. The pandemic is also creating new tensions between authoritarian governments that seek to control the story of the spread and international outlets that, as domestic crackdowns intensify, can still sometimes report freely and be read locally online.

And then there's President Trump. It can sometimes be hard to put your finger on the concrete effects of his corrosive rhetoric, but you can look to media around the world to see them. American private and nonprofit investment, and official political support, through the years had been a double-edged sword for independent media. That support helped new outlets around the world get a foothold, but the American connection could also be used to accuse them of disloyalty.

President Trump appears to have laid down the sword entirely.

“The knowledge that the United States and other Western democracies are going to be on your case often deters authoritarian leaders from taking these kinds of actions,” said Representative Tom Malinowski of New Jersey, who was assistant secretary of State for democracy, human rights and labor in the Obama administration. Not any more. Now, he said, “the official policy of the president of the United States is that free and independent media are the enemy of the people.”

Last week, in a particularly clear [signal](#) to autocrats around the world, the Trump administration began refusing to renew visas for **Voice of America** employees, some of whom may be driven back into the arms of authoritarian governments they’ve been criticizing on the American airwaves.

A State Department spokesman, who spoke (despite his title) on the condition he not be named, said, “The department speaks both publicly and privately about the importance of independent media and on specific cases, where appropriate, and will continue to do so.” He added that the secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, “has called on all governments to release journalists jailed for their work and to hold accountable those who commit crimes against them.”

The American media is now convulsing over questions of speech, important fights with real stakes, particularly when it comes to the decisions made by and for the giant tech platforms. But the overriding lesson from President Trump’s admirers around the world is obvious: that the ultimate, most severe threats to a free press come from governments, which, to justify their actions, have seized opportunistically on causes ranging from requiring platforms to moderate posts to cracking down on “fake news” to imposing new licensing requirements. I started reporting on the attacks on my favorite journalists like Mr. Gan and Ms. Ressa feeling pessimistic. But it’s impossible not to be moved by their perhaps insane optimism and by how much they love their work. “The fact that there is nothing else out there gives us an immense sense of purpose — it makes you feel like you’re really doing something essential despite all the odds,” Ms. Attalah said.

Mr. Gan told me he “would not have lasted 20 years if I was not an incorrigible optimist,” adding that the current crackdown in Malaysia could be the worst yet. (In fact, he asked me not to describe the make and color of his car because it could be a target for attacks.) Ms. Ressa’s motto is, “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.”

And Luz Mely Reyes, who co-founded a Venezuelan site whose name translates as “Firefly Effect,” said she has noticed one bright spot in the crisis: Even government officials have been forced to rely on her site’s and others’ reports on the coronavirus because they know the official numbers can’t be trusted.

“They know that people need information, and they know that people don’t believe them,” she said.

Ben Smith is the media columnist. He joined The Times in 2020 after eight years as founding editor in chief of BuzzFeed News. Before that, he covered politics for Politico, The New York Daily News, The New York Observer and

The New York Sun. Email: ben.smith@nytimes.com @benyt

A version of this article appears in print on July 13, 2020, Section B, Page 1 of the New York edition with the headline: News Sites Risk Wrath Of Autocrats. [Order Reprints](#) | [Today's Paper](#) | [Subscribe](#)

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[Trump Appointee Might Not Extend Visas for Foreign Journalists at V.O.A.](#)

The action could be a blow to the news-gathering abilities of Voice of America, an independently operated media agency funded by the government.

NYT, By Pranshu Verma and Edward Wong

Published July 9, 2020

Updated July 12, 2020

WASHINGTON — As many as 100 foreign citizens working in the United States as journalists for the Voice of America, a government-funded news outlet, might not have their visas extended once they expire, according to people familiar with the planning.

Michael Pack, the new chief executive for the U.S. Agency for Global Media, has indicated he may not approve extensions for any journalist holding a J-1 visa, which allows foreign citizens to temporarily work in the United States in ways that promote cultural exchanges.

The decision could be a blow to the news-gathering and global-broadcasting abilities of the V.O.A., which operates independently but is funded by the government. Foreign journalists on the specialty visa are often recruited to work there because they are able to translate American news reports into languages like Swahili or Mandarin and can do reporting using those languages.

“J-1 visas are a crucial tool for management to get the talent that is needed to run a complex multilingual news organization,” said David Ensor, a former director for the Voice of America. “That’s what V.O.A. is.”

In a statement, a spokesman for the U.S. Agency for Global Media said it was conducting a comprehensive assessment of those workers who hold J-1 visas. The move was meant to improve “agency management and protect U.S. national security,” he said, and to do so, it was “imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused.”

The planning was described by people with knowledge of the discussions, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the actions were pending.

The discussion on the visas, [first reported by NPR](#), follows the firing on Wednesday of Bay Fang, who became executive editor of Radio Free Asia after Mr. Pack removed her last month as president of the organization. She was asked to leave the organization by the acting president, Parameswaran Ponnudurai, who had recently met with Mr. Pack, according to people familiar with the actions.

Ms. Fang was one of the chiefs of four U.S.-funded news organizations and a technology group

whom Mr. Pack [removed on June 17](#), in a decision that angered Democratic and Republican lawmakers.

Those four organizations and V.O.A. are overseen by the global media agency. The director of V.O.A. and her deputy [resigned in June](#) after Mr. Pack was confirmed by the Senate.

Mr. Pack also dismissed the bipartisan boards of the organizations on June 17 and named successors, almost all of whom are Trump administration political appointees.

Last week, Mr. Pack also named James M. Miles, a former secretary of state for South Carolina, to lead [the Open Technology Fund](#), an internet freedom nonprofit under Mr. Pack's purview.

Mr. Miles is little known in the internet freedom community and his hiring was not accepted by the organization's staff, according to a letter the group's general counsel wrote to Mr. Pack, which was obtained by The New York Times.

The actions by Mr. Pack have raised questions about the editorial independence of the news outlets under his management. Mr. Pack, a conservative filmmaker, is a close ally of Stephen K. Bannon, a former campaign strategist and White House adviser to President Trump who has [pressed Mr. Trump](#) to take charge of the government-funded news organizations and reshape them.

Mr. Bannon has also publicly criticized V.O.A., calling it "a rotten fish from top to bottom."

Mr. Pack's recent actions have been [challenged in the courts](#) by the Open Technology Fund. A federal judge ruled last week in Mr. Pack's favor. The plaintiffs filed an appeal on Thursday. Pranshu Verma reported from Washington, and Edward Wong from Lewes, Del.

U.S.

[Trump Defends Playing Golf, Says Media 'Park Themselves Anywhere They Can to Get a Picture'](#)

Newsweek, By Jason Lemon On 7/12/20 at 10:35 AM EDT

Steve Harman, White House bureau chief for Voice of America News, also fact-checked the president's claim.

"During his presidency, @realDonaldTrump has been on the grounds of his golf courses or played golf elsewhere 275 times," Harman tweeted. In a follow-up post, he wrote: "During his first term in office, @BarackObama played golf 113 times."

[POLITICO Playbook](#), By [ANNA PALMER](#) and [JAKE SHERMAN](#) 07/11/2020 09:23 AM EDT
PLAYBOOKERS

TRANSITION -- Jim Tunnessen has been hired as chief information officer at the National

Endowment for the Arts. He is currently chief information officer and chief digital officer at **Voice of America**, and is a USDA and DHS alum.

From: (b) (6)
To: [USAGM Media Clips](#)
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 9:20:26 AM

[Members of Congress Call on USAGM to Explain J-1 Visa Denial](#)

VOA News
September 16, 2020
Jessica Jerreat

[US must demand equal access to Russian airwaves](#)

The Hill
September 15, 2020
Jeffrey Gedmin and Gary Schmitt

[U.S. senators introduce resolution calling for sanctions over Belarus crackdown – Panorama](#)

The Armenian Reporter
September 16, 2020
Jasyson

[Crimean Tatar civic journalists risk persecution to cover their community in Russian-annexed Crimea](#)

Committee to Protect Journalists
September 15, 2020
Valentinas Mite

[China's Dark Turn](#)

The Daily Signal, The Heritage Foundation
September 15, 2020
John Stossel

From: (b) (6)
To: [USAGM Media Clips](#)
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Monday, September 28, 2020 9:23:45 AM

[US cuts \\$20m in funding for group helping pro-democracy efforts in Iran](#)

Open Technology Fund supports activists operating in Iran, Belarus and Hong Kong, helping them bypass internet censorship and state surveillance

Middle East Eye

September 25, 2020

MEE staff

[Trump led Admin Stops Aid For Pro-democracy Groups In Belarus, Hong Kong And Iran](#)

Finance Rewind

September 27, 2020

Suhani Chaudhary

[The Inside Story of How Signal Became the Private Messaging App for an Age of Fear and Distrust](#)

TIME

September 25, 2020

Billy Perrigo

[Washington finally admits it has been interfering in Hong Kong](#)

Members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee have blasted Michael Pack, the new czar of the US government's global media services, for stymieing US influence operations in the city

South China Morning Post

September 25, 2020

Alex Lo

[Trump Administration Proposes New Rule to Severely Restrict Student Visas](#)

The Slate

September 25, 2020

Whitney Tesi

[Aibek Kulchumanov Radio Free EuropeRadio Liberty](#)

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre
September 28, 2020

[Public Diplomacy and the New “Old” War: Countering State-Sponsored Disinformation \(2020\)](#)

US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy
ACPD SPECIAL REPORT
September 25, 2020

[Mike Pompeo’s South America Trip Demonstrates Need for Sustained Commitment](#)

It is time for Washington to make clear that partnership with the United States offers more opportunity and promise than working with China.

The National Interest
September 26, 2020
James Jay Carafano Ana Quintana

From: (b) (6)
To: [USAGM Media Clips](#)
Subject: Articles FYI
Date: Thursday, October 29, 2020 9:23:35 AM

[New rule could drastically limit the visas of foreign journalists in the US](#)

Public Media Alliance
October 25, 2020

[Trump Gets His Media Empire](#)

O'Dwyer's
October 28, 2020
Kevin McCauley

[The Press Is Giving Trump a Free Pass, Again](#)

Media outlets appear to be operating on the assumption that Trump will lose, and are covering his latest scandals accordingly.

The Atlantic
October 28, 2020
David A. Graham

[News vs. propaganda: Trump blurs the line](#)

Voice of America, a beacon for free press around the world, is now poised to become a megaphone for the White House's political agenda.

Boston Globe
October 28, 2020
Editorial Board

[United States: Media Agency Removes Editorial Protection for Journalists at Publicly Funded Broadcasters](#)

The decision threatens the independence and reputation of news outlets that have informed foreign audiences for decades.

Freedom House
October 28, 2020

[U.S. GOVERNMENT-FUNDED BROADCASTERS MUST REMAIN FREE FROM POLITICAL](#)

INTERFERENCE

PEN America decries "vandalism" being committed by USAGM CEO Michael Pack, files court brief in lawsuit against the U.S. Agency for Global Media

PEN America

October 28, 2020

Press Statement: Government Accountability Project Denounces Political Appointee's Attempt to Eliminate Firewall at Voice for America

Government Accountability Project

October 27, 2020

USAGM CEO removes "firewall" protecting editorial independence

Public Media Alliance

October 28, 2020

'Stuff of Tinpot Dictatorships': Trump Appointee Denounced for Move to Turn US Media Agency Into Mouthpiece for State 'Propaganda'

"Trump stooge Michael Pack is eliminating the legally required editorial independence of U.S.-funded news outlets abroad so they can act like Trump's Ministry of Propaganda," said Sen. Elizabeth Warren.

Common Dreams

October 28, 2020

Kenny Stancil

Russian labs are caught making illegal chemical weapons. Will Trump finally respond?

Washington Post

October 28, 2020

Editorial Board

From: (b) (6)
To: (b) (6); Matthew Walsh; Oanh Tran; Marie Lennon; David Kligerman; Grant Turner; Terry Balazs; Shawn Powers; (b) (6); Jeffrey Shapiro; (b) (6); (b) (6); Lillian Cheng; (b) (6); (b) (6); Gary Thatcher; (b) (6); (b) (6); Public Relations; (b) (6); James Reeves; (b) (6); (b) (6); Keli Chao; Diane Cullio; Emily Pauline Newman; Daniel Hanlon; Logan B. McVey; Jonathan Bronitsky; Michael B. Williams; Andre Mendes; (b) (6); Elez Biberaj; VOA Division Directors; (b) (6); USAGM Public Affairs Staff; (b) (6)
Subject: Articles fyi
Date: Monday, August 3, 2020 11:42:36 AM

[One Free Press Coalition Spotlights Journalists Under Attack](#)

This month's focus is on Austin Tice, an American photojournalist who has gone missing in Syria and is presumed to be alive.

WIRED STAFF BUSINESS, 08.03.2020 09:00 AM

6. [Svetlana Prokopyeva \(Russia\)](#)

Journalist describes harassment and conviction as intimidation.

Freelance journalist **Svetlana Prokopyeva** was found guilty on July 6 of "[justifying terrorism](#)" in a brief 2018 commentary about repressive governments radicalizing young people. She described the charges as an "act of intimidation." A regional correspondent for the U.S. Congress-funded broadcaster **Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty** in Russia, Prokopyeva was fined \$7,000, her computer and cellphone were confiscated not to be returned, her home was raided and her bank accounts frozen.

[Rong Chhun charged with incitement over border comments](#)

By **Cambodia Daily** -August 2, 2020

The charge comes after **Radio Free Asia (RFA)** aired a story on the evening of July 31 regarding the Cambodia-Vietnam border, in which Chhun is quoted saying that Vietnamese soldiers have invaded Cambodian territory and expelled villagers from their land in Tboung Khmum province's Ponheakrek district.

[Taxpayer-funded Voice of America has been promoting Biden to Muslims](#)

By Andrea Widburg

The American Thinker, August 1, 2020

Alhurra in the Arab Press

7-31

Alhurra cited statements from Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina) regarding a deal between the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and an American oil company to modernize oilfields in northeast Syria.

Cited by [Orient Net](#), [Step Agency](#), [Enab Baladi](#), [Jesr Press](#), and [Erem News](#).

Alhurra reported that the State Department and Treasury Department continued their sanctions campaign against the Assad regime by releasing 14 new designations under the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act.

Cited by [Masr 20](#).

Alhurra reported that Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi unexpectedly visited the central investigation prison in Al-Muthanna airport, Baghdad.

Cited by [Mokhber](#) and [al-Hadath](#).

Mary J. Zoorob

Communications Manager

Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Inc.

CONGRESS

[Why Trump is focused on making Marco Rubio happy](#)

POLITICO, By SABRINA RODRIGUEZ08/03/2020 04:30 AM EDT

The Florida senator plays an outsize role in Latin America — and he makes little secret of it. But other Rubio allies say he held the administration to a hard line. “Rubio is seen in Cuba as the main person that opposes the Castro regime in the United States and the person that has the ear of the president,” said Tomás Regalado, a former mayor of Miami and **former head of Radio and TV Marti**, the U.S.-funded broadcast network aimed at countering Cuba’s state-run media. “If there was a moment when anybody in the administration said it’s time to give a second look to what we’re doing on Cuba, Rubio stopped that,” said Regalado, who was recommended by Rubio for the TV Marti post.

[Media](#)

[With their visas in limbo, journalists at Voice of America worry that they’ll be thrown out of America](#)

By [Paul Farhi](#)

Washington Post, August 2, 2020 at 2:57 PM EDT

Bricio Segovia has less than a month before his time is up. With his visa set to expire at the end of August, the Voice of America reporter will be obligated to leave the United States and go back to Spain, his native country.

Under normal circumstances, Segovia wouldn't have to worry about losing his job at VOA, where he has covered the White House for the government-funded news organization's Latin American service for the past two years. For decades, VOA's foreign staff have routinely had their visas renewed by VOA's parent organization, enabling them to fill jobs for which they have special experience and expertise.

But the new chief executive of VOA's parent agency, [a Trump appointee named Michael Pack](#), has stopped renewing visas, leaving 76 VOA employees like Segovia facing imminent removal — and undermining the agency's ability to deliver news to non-English-speaking audiences around the world, staffers argue. Pack hasn't said why.

"We are here because we worked for it, by the merits, legally," says Segovia, an experienced journalist who speaks seven languages. "I feel frustrated because I can't get an answer from Mr. Pack, and sad because we know this will hurt VOA. At the end of the day, we're here because we love this country. It is unjust."

For some of Segovia's colleagues, the stakes are even higher. They include people from countries headed by authoritarian regimes who fear persecution once they are repatriated, among them journalists from Venezuela, China, Russia, Iran and other nations in which VOA's broadcasts serve as one of the few sources of independent news and information.

Another journalist, whose visa has expired, said security agents in her home country have questioned family members about her work and will probably greet her return with suspicion. "I think they'll find it very weird that the U.S. government has sent back someone who was working for the U.S. government as a journalist," she said. "It's just a grotesque situation."

The journalist spoke on the condition of anonymity, asking not to identify her name or home country, out of concern for potential reprisals.

Pack, who declined an interview request through his representatives, has been vague about the reasons for not renewing the visas. In response to questions this week, his spokesman sent [a news release issued last month](#) in which Pack said "other federal agencies" had found "systemic, severe, and fundamental security failures" at the agencies Pack supervises, including VOA. Many of these alleged lapses, he said, "have persisted for years."

Pack hasn't said what threats have arisen or why journalists holding visas at VOA warranted special scrutiny. VOA's international journalists undergo extensive background checks before they are hired.

Pack's apparent lack of interest in renewing visas, however, is in keeping with the Trump

administration's generally tough stance on immigration. Citing the pandemic and its effect on American workers, [Trump in June temporarily banned](#) new entries via J-1 visas, the kind held by VOA workers. It's not clear whether the ban affects renewals.

The visa issue is one of several policies enacted by Pack that have roiled the agencies under his control since he was confirmed in June to head the U.S. Agency for Global Media. He won confirmation after a bruising and largely partisan confirmation battle in the Senate.

[*How Trump's obsessions with media and loyalty coalesced in a battle for Voice of America*](#)

Among his first official acts, Pack summarily [fired the directors](#) of each of the agencies he oversees, including Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Asia, replacing them with his own managers. The director and deputy director of Voice of America [resigned two days before](#) Pack's purge.

The shake-up was preceded by an extraordinary White House campaign to vilify Voice of America, an independent news organization that was founded by the federal government during World War II to counter Nazi propaganda and that later served as an information bulwark against oppressive communist regimes. The White House alleged in April that [VOA had published "propaganda"](#) on behalf of China and Iran, though it offered little evidence of it. White House social media director Dan Scavino followed up the statement by sharing a tweet from VOA's official Twitter account that highlighted an Associated Press video of a light show in Wuhan, China, staged to celebrate the city's alleged eradication of the [coronavirus](#). "[DISGRACE!!](#)" he wrote.

USAGM [said last week](#) that it was opening an investigation into VOA's publication of an Urdu-language video that [supposedly promoted Democrat Joe Biden's](#) presidential campaign in violation of VOA's rules against partisanship. A VOA spokeswoman also said it was looking into the video, which has been deleted from its website. (Biden's campaign has said [he would fire Pack](#) if Biden is elected.)

VOA has long employed journalists who are citizens of other countries because they offer specific knowledge and expertise, including fluency in English and one or more of the 47 languages in which VOA broadcasts. In addition to their language skills, they are steeped in the history, culture and recent politics of the countries they report on, and they often have hard-to-replace sources and contacts among dissident communities. Many were educated at American universities and have worked at other Western news organizations.

People at VOA say the potential loss of dozens of such journalists would undermine the organization's ability to produce news and information aimed at non-English-speaking

audiences abroad.

Segovia, for example, has sometimes contributed news and interviews to a weekly news program called "[Venezuela 360](#)," one of the few sources of independent reporting available in the strife-scarred nation. Five of the seven people involved in production of the program, he said, are facing the expiration of their visas, complicating its future.

VOA noted the disruption it was facing in a [news story it published last month](#) that spotlighted a broadcast journalist in its Thai-language service, one of three people in the eight-person unit who holds a visa. With her visa renewal in limbo, the journalist, Warangkana Chomchuen, had to apply for a repatriation flight back to Thailand. Her wife, who is in the United States on a spouse visa, isn't eligible for a repatriation flight because she isn't a Thai national. Instead, she will have to return to her home city, Toronto, leaving the couple indefinitely separated.

Segovia is hoping he won't have to make similar departure plans. "We got no warning whatsoever about this," he said the other day. "We've gotten no explanations, just the silent treatment from [Pack]. He should understand what's at stake. He's playing with people's lives."

[Paul Farhi](#)

Paul Farhi is The Washington Post's media reporter. He started at The Post in 1988 and has been a financial reporter, a political reporter and a Style reporter. [Follow](#)

[Legal Issues](#)

[Trump administration is crippling international Internet freedom effort by withholding funds, officials say](#)

By **[Spencer S. Hsu](#)**

Washington Post, July 31, 2020 at 4:28 PM EDT

The Trump administration is withholding \$20 million in funding approved by Congress for a U.S. Internet freedom organization, forcing the cutoff Friday of tools used by tens of millions of people worldwide to access the Internet and uncensored news through the Voice of America, officials said.

The head of the Washington-based Open Technology Fund said Thursday that it is being forced to halt 49 of the fund's 60 Internet freedom projects. The move, according to the head of the fund, affects about 80 percent of the group's work helping human rights and pro-

democracy advocates, journalists and others in 200 countries.

“Most troubling is that these actions will directly strengthen the hands of Internet freedom adversaries, like the Chinese and Iranian governments, who are actively working to undermine freedom and democracy around the world,” the fund’s acting chief executive, Laura Cunningham, wrote in an email to the U.S. Agency for Global Media.

The funding fight is the latest fallout in a power struggle between the Open Technology Fund and the U.S. Agency for Global Media, which oversees U.S. government-funded news outlets.

After his confirmation in June, the agency’s new director, [Michael Pack](#), [moved](#) to [fire](#) the fund’s board and officers, before being [blocked by a federal appeals court from doing so](#) in early July.

[*Appeals court blocks Trump appointee Michael Pack’s takeover of organization fighting digital censorship and surveillance*](#)

In an email Thursday to Pack, Cunningham said the ongoing “arbitrary and unnecessary” withholding of grants earmarked by Congress has compromised the fund’s work countering digital surveillance, supporting technologies used by 2 billion people a day. She also said it “jeopardized the lives of millions of users who rely on our technologies worldwide,” including the agency’s own journalists and its audience overseas.

The cutoff “not only compromises OTF’s mission but sabotages USAGM’s as well,” Cunningham said, including the advancement of human rights, U.S. foreign policy and national security priorities.

The email, a copy of which was provided to The Washington Post, states that 85 percent of the U.S. Agency for Global Media’s audience in Iran and 40 percent of its audience in China rely on fund-supported technologies to access content produced by VOA, Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Asia and Middle East Broadcast Networks.

The U.S. Agency for Global Media, in a statement, called OTF’s accusations meritless and not based on fact. It said the fund is “very focused on being handed millions of taxpayer dollars without any oversight, whatsoever. USAGM is committed to protecting U.S. national security, sharing America’s story with the world, and supporting legitimate Internet freedom projects.”

Pack’s moves are controversial among some executive branch security and diplomatic officials battling censorship and surveillance by U.S. adversaries in Iran, China and Venezuela.

Spokesmen for the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development declined to comment on whether they supported the funding freeze or whether it was consistent with the administration's policies countering repressive regimes, referring questions to the agency.

Christine Bednarz, spokeswoman for the National Endowment for Democracy, a congressionally funded organization founded in 1983 to support the spread of human rights, said NED does not take positions on U.S. policy but "anti-censorship and circumvention technologies — such as those provided by the fund — are critical to the ability of people to access information and work in closed societies, like Iran, China, and Venezuela."

The Open Technology Fund is one of the largest sources of funding for developing, disseminating and maintaining free, open-source technology tools such as Signal and Tor, which permit users to encrypt communications and anonymously access the Internet despite government controls.

[Read the text of the Open Technology Fund email here](#)

It also works to protect journalists, sources, activists and consumers from digital attack, and to aid researchers and technology developers. Defenders say halting support of tools that secure operating systems, communications and data storage will cut off a critical information lifeline for people documenting and sharing evidence in repressive societies with accelerating surveillance, putting those who rely on it directly in harm's way.

"The impact is devastating, not just on our work but on people we work for," said Dragana Kaurin, whose Localization Lab translates security and privacy tools into 200 local languages, including for vulnerable groups in Bolivia, Colombia, Myanmar, Turkey, Vietnam and Zimbabwe.

"People don't trust private foreign security tools that aren't in their own language ... and it takes time to build that trust," said Kaurin, who has helped independent journalists in Vietnam apply hardware encryption tools such as Veracrypt to adapt to government raids.

Users "are asking, what's going to happen now? What are we going to use? Who has our data? ... Are tools like Signal and Tor going to be safe to use if they lose the funding to update their code regularly?" she said. "Trust is the most expensive thing in the world, and you can lose it so easily."

The Open Technology Fund projects include a Red Team Lab, which has audited and patched more than 2,100 privacy and security vulnerabilities in tools such as SecureDrop, used by journalists to accept story tips from anonymous sources.

“It’s a great loss to secure and private communications worldwide, and especially to those who are targeted by domineering nation states,” said Red Team Lab member Erik Cabetas, head of Brooklyn-based Include Security.

Another funded group, eQualitie of Montreal, helps protect more than 500 vulnerable civil society organizations from cyberattacks with its deflect.ca project, and is applying machine learning technology to respond to malicious Web traffic and developing a peer-to-peer messaging app that can work during Internet shutdowns, founder Dmitri Vitalev said.

The fund also supports the monitoring and detection of increasingly sophisticated Internet censorship in about 210 countries through the Open Observatory of Network Interference, which collaborates with entities such as Psiphon, a censorship circumvention tool highly popular in Iran.

The network has identified politically motivated attacks, including disruptions in 2019 of social media sites aimed at supporters of Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó, anti-government demonstrators in Ethiopia, and fuel protesters in Zimbabwe, said the group’s research and partnerships director Maria Xynou. It also has spotted targeting of lesbian and gay people and ethnic minorities in Iran, Ethiopia and Indonesia, she said.

OTF is one of the few outlets focused on marginalized populations, the people who are most affected by pervasive censorship and surveillance, those who understand it and those who are best positioned to fight it, Xynou said.

“Those people have trusted OTF, and if there are drastic changes to its leadership and its funding, that means people who are best positioned to defend Internet freedom will no longer be supported,” Xynou said. “This will have a long-term impact on the broader Internet freedom community beyond our work.”

The Internet freedom arena “is a cat-and-mouse space, where governments find new ways of spying and oppressing human rights, and defenders constantly need to develop new ways to protect them,” said Raphael Mimoun, founder of Horizontal. The group develops an OTF-funded tool called Tella that securely hides and encrypts sensitive material on mobile devices and shares it with human rights organizations.

“Without OTF funding, we are simply losing the ability to keep our tools secure, upgrade security infrastructure, and to make sure our users are protected against repression,” Mimoun said.

[U.S. Internet freedom group alleges harassment by Trump administration continues despite](#)

[thwarted takeover](#)

The U.S. Agency for Global Media has paid \$9.3 million of the fund's \$20 million 2020 allocation to date, the agency said. But it also holds an additional \$9 million of prior year allocations that it has promised to release as part of a transfer of contracts from Radio Free Asia, where the fund began as a pilot project in 2012, Cunningham said.

Pack's aides have complained of "bias and partisanship" and unspecified but "known mismanagement and scandals" at media components. The agency's statement called the fund's desire to divert attention from these failures "transparent." Cunningham said the fund has not received any explanation or justification for the funding delay, nor has the agency made it aware of any "compliance or security failings."

"OTF has always and continues to welcome and comply with USAGM oversight as well as congressional, OIG, and GAO oversight," she said, adding, "I'm disheartened by this mischaracterization of issues that OTF takes so seriously."

[Spencer Hsu](#)

Spencer S. Hsu is an investigative reporter, two-time Pulitzer finalist and national Emmy Award nominee. Hsu has covered homeland security, immigration, Virginia politics and Congress. [Follow](#)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Articles/ICYMI - The Hill - The Voice of America's visa conundrum
Date: Thursday, July 30, 2020 12:53:59 PM

[The Voice of America's visa conundrum](#)

BY KIM ANDREW ELLIOTT, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR — 07/30/20 12:30 PM EDT
THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY CONTRIBUTORS ARE THEIR OWN AND NOT THE VIEW OF THE HILL

13

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Kim Andrew Elliott is a retired Voice of America audience research analyst and media journalist.

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Articles/ICYMI
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 4:39:26 PM

[A new Trump appointee has put internet freedom projects in crisis mode](#)

'There are so many countries and individuals who need this support right now,' says former OTF president

The Verge, By Russell Brandom Jun 23, 2020, 11:55am EDT

Politics

[Sen. Bob Menendez calls for State Department inspector general to investigate federal media CEO Michael Pack](#)

CNBC, Published Tue, Jun 23 2020 11:00 AM EDT

Brian Schwartz

@schwartzbCNBC

[House Democrat calls on US media agency head to testify about firings](#)

The Hill, By Laura Kelly - 06/23/20 10:48 AM EDT

Additional coverage:

Reuters: <https://moneyandmarketswatchdog.com/house-committee-calls-trump-broadcasting-chief-to-testify/>

VOA - <https://www.voanews.com/usa/key-us-lawmaker-calls-new-government-media-chief-testify>

Atlantic Council (blog) - <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/us-government-broadcasters-have-long-advanced-the-cause-of-freedom-now-theyre-under-threat/>

Global Government Forum - <https://www.globalgovernmentforum.com/trumps-new-overseas-broadcast-head-sacks-network-chiefs-and-advisory-boards/>

Wonkette.com - <https://www.wonkette.com/donald-trump-may-finally-have-his-very-own-propaganda-network-it-used-to-be-voice-of-america>

Moyers for Democracy - <https://billmoyers.com/story/now-trump-really-is-the-voice-of-america/>

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OTF:

Axios - <https://www.axios.com/falun-gong-us-agency-global-media-001fcf52-95fa-43de-b0c7->

[Ocd7cfc2918f.html](https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2020/06/otfs-work-keep-internet-free-and-open-successful-dont-throw-it-away)

EFF - <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2020/06/otfs-work-keep-internet-free-and-open-successful-dont-throw-it-away>

U.S. Designates Four More Chinese News Organizations as Foreign Missions

The move brings to nine the total number of Chinese state-run news organizations that the State Department has designated with that label. China will most likely retaliate.

NYT, By [Edward Wong](#)

- June 22, 2020
-

[阅读简体中文版](#)[閱讀繁體中文版](#)

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration announced on Monday that it was designating [four more](#) Chinese state-run media organizations that have operations in the United States [as foreign missions](#), in a new round of restrictions likely to lead to some form of retaliation from China.

State Department officials said they were taking the action to make it clear to American citizens that the organizations are viewed by the U.S. government as propaganda organs for a foreign government. The groups will be asked to send to the department a complete roster of employees in the United States and a list of their real estate holdings.

David R. Stilwell, the assistant secretary for East Asia and the Pacific, declined to say in a telephone briefing with reporters what actions the United States might then take based on that information.

The move is part of broader efforts by some Trump administration officials to [counter aggressive policies by China](#), though President Trump himself [has undermined the campaign](#) at times and has pleaded with Xi Jinping, the Chinese leader whom he describes fondly on Twitter, to

help ensure his re-election, according to a new book by John R. Bolton, Mr. Trump's former national security adviser.

In February, after the first round of such designations of Chinese news organizations, and after a move by China to [expel three journalists](#) for The Wall Street Journal, the Trump administration imposed visa quotas on the five organizations that it had labeled functionaries of a foreign government.

That meant cutting the visas of 60 foreign employees. The Chinese government then [expelled American journalists](#) for The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal. That action resulted in the departures of about 13 journalists from China.

The four organizations designated Monday are China Central Television, China News Service, People's Daily and Global Times.

"These entities are not independent news organizations," Mr. Stilwell said, adding that they were "substantially owned or effectively controlled" by the Chinese Communist Party or the Chinese government.

China Central Television is the main state-run television network in China. Its main overseas arm, China Global Television Network, or CGTN, was listed in the first round of designations in February.

People's Daily is the main Communist Party newspaper. In the February designations, the State Department named a related company, Hai Tian Development USA, which distributes the newspaper in the United States.

Global Times is a nationalistic newspaper that is not an official outlet for party statements in the same way People's Daily is, but it is owned by People's Daily. Its editor in chief, Hu Xijin, is [outspoken on Twitter](#), where he often criticizes the foreign policy of the United States.

China News Service is the second-largest news agency in China, behind Xinhua, which the State Department designated in February.

The State Department [also designated](#) that month China Daily Distribution Corporation, an arm of China's official English-language newspaper, and China Radio International.

Mr. Stilwell said the State Department did not have numbers on foreign employees who currently work for the four newly designated organizations.

He added that although American officials were concerned about

Chinese propaganda, the administration had no plans to cut off distribution channels for the state-run news organizations. The telephone briefing on press freedoms in China and the United States [turned testy](#) when a Reuters reporter tried to ask Mr. Stilwell a question about Mr. Bolton's book and the administration's China policy. Morgan Ortagus, a State Department spokeswoman, said the question was inappropriate and told the AT&T operator to "mute that line." After a Bloomberg News reporter tried following up by asking about that action in the context of press freedoms, she said his question was "offensive."

In recent years, China has intensified its efforts to coerce foreign news organizations into self-censoring their coverage. Notably, the Chinese Foreign Ministry has increasingly refrained from issuing visas to news organizations whose reporting it deems too critical or shortened the length of time of visas or residency permits issued to correspondents, from the standard one-year period to as brief as one month. The Chinese government did this to Times journalists, among others, before expelling almost all of them in March.

From: (b) (6)
To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); (b) (6)
Subject: Articles/ICYMI
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 8:42:16 AM

[Members of Congress Call on USAGM to Explain J-1 Visa Denial](#)

VOA News
September 16, 2020
Jessica Jerreat

[US must demand equal access to Russian airwaves](#)

The Hill
Jeffrey Gedmin and Gary Schmitt
September 15, 2020

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Articles/ICYMI
Date: Friday, September 4, 2020 2:35:53 PM

[The Pentagon orders the military newspaper Stars and Stripes to shut down by the end of the month](#)

"Trump has taken over VOA, Radio Free Europe, etc...planting loyalists, firing critical journalists. He can't do that with Stripes so he's just...zeroing out the budget."

Nieman Lab
September 4, 2020
Laura Hazard Owen

[Nothing This Administration* Does Is Unfathomable](#)

The Pentagon has ordered the shuttering of Stars & Stripes for no reason other than "because we can."

Esquire
September 4, 2020
Charles P. Pierce

[Trump Administration Closing Military Newspaper That Informs Troops — and Speaks for Them](#)

Stars and Stripes will cease print and online publication at the end of the month. A bipartisan group of senators says the Pentagon should find money in its huge budget to continue funding.

New York Times
September 4, 2020
Helene Cooper

WASHINGTON — Stars and Stripes, the military newspaper that has both informed and spoken for American troops over the decades, will cease print and online publication by the last day of September, expanding the Trump administration's war on news media to include those paid by the government to cover the military.

Begun during the Civil War, "Stripes" has more recently frustrated presidents and defense secretaries during the "Forever Wars" that began in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks by elevating the voices of those in uniform who contradicted commanders and political leaders.

But while the newspaper found enough backers in Congress and among retired military officers to

keep it alive during previous administrations, that support has been unable to reverse Defense Department plans to zero-out the Stars and Stripes budget during a Trump presidency marked by ongoing battles with journalists.

A bipartisan group of eleven Democratic and four Republican senators called on the Defense Department to maintain funding for the publication, which has around 1.3 million readers online and in print. In a letter on Wednesday to Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper, the senators said the Pentagon, with its budget of more than \$700 billion, could surely find the \$15.5 million in federal funding needed to keep Stars and Stripes going.

“We urge you to take steps to preserve the funding prerogatives of Congress before allowing any such disruption to take place,” said the letter, signed by, among others, Senators Dianne Feinstein, Democrat of California; Tammy Duckworth, Democrat of Illinois; and Susan Collins, Republican of Maine. “Stars and Stripes is an essential part of our nation’s freedom of the press that serves the very population charged with defending that freedom.”

Senator Lindsey Graham, Republican of South Carolina, sent a separate letter to Mr. Esper last month on behalf of the publication, and cited “strong support” for Stars and Stripes in Congress. “As a veteran who has served overseas, I know the value that the Stars and Stripes brings to its readers,” wrote Mr. Graham, a former Air Force Reserve lawyer who retired as a colonel.

The challenge facing Stars and Stripes — maintaining editorial independence from the government while depending on government funding — is playing out in other parts of the Trump administration.

Similar efforts to weaken federally funded news outlets are underway at the U.S. Agency for Global Media, which oversees international broadcast outlets like Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia and the Middle East Broadcast Networks.

In February, Mr. Esper, who was appointed by Mr. Trump last year, proposed ending the Defense Department’s funding to Stars and Stripes.

The paper has struggled with the same economic challenges of all print publications in the internet age. Advocates also point out that government funding is required because no newspaper, even in the industry’s most successful days, could reliably distribute in war zones without financial assistance.

But the Trump administration’s decision to kill off Stars and Stripes is especially pointed given the president’s public antipathy toward journalists — and his disdainful comments toward military sacrifice surfacing in recent days.

[Mr. Trump on Thursday night](#) denied [a report in The Atlantic](#) that he canceled a trip to the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery near Paris in 2018 because he did not want to get his hair disheveled in the rain — and because he did not believe it important to honor American war dead. According to the article, the president referred to the 1,800 American Marines who lost their lives at Belleau Wood during World War I as “suckers.”

But Mr. Trump's denials are hampered by the fact that he has often disdained veterans who had been captured in war, including [John McCain, who served as a Republican senator from Arizona](#).

Signs of a growing discontent among troops for the commander in chief are starting to show.

A Military Times poll this week showed a continued decline in active-duty service members' views of Mr. Trump, and a slight but significant preference for former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. in the upcoming election among troops surveyed.

The poll, taken in late July and early August, before the political conventions, found half of 1,018 respondents surveyed had an unfavorable view of Mr. Trump, compared with 38 percent who had a favorable view. In a poll conducted at the start of Mr. Trump's presidency, 37 percent of troops had an unfavorable opinion, and 46 percent had a favorable view.

[Stars and Stripes](#) first started as a publication for Union troops during the Civil War, when soldiers commanded by Ulysses S. Grant overran Bloomfield, Mo., en route to Cape Girardeau. Former pressmen were among the troops, and they set up shop at a local newspaper office that had been abandoned by its Confederate sympathizer publisher.

Since then, the paper has been on newsstands in military "PX" shopping areas and command tents from Langres, France, during World War II to Afghanistan to Iraq more recently. It has published cartoons that lampooned commanders, and news articles and commentary often at odds with the official view from the Pentagon or White House.

It has been a journalistic port of call for the grunt on the ground, because it has always been available to them, even during the height of combat in America's wars.

"The U.S. military as a whole is trying to reduce its electromagnetic signature, and that means service members will likely not have their phones or even access to the internet while in a war zone," said Jeff Schogol, a former Stars and Stripes reporter who now writes for the online publication [Task & Purpose](#). "That's why Stars and Stripes is still vital to keeping troops downrange informed. The Russians and Chinese cannot jam or launch a denial of service attack against physical copies of a newspaper."

The newspaper goes into a level of detail about things that matter to troops that other publications do not. For instance, headlines in Stars and Stripes on Friday included "U.S. Army Japan eases travel restrictions in time for Labor Day weekend" and "Face masks with valves are now off limits for soldiers in South Korea."

Journalists who work for Stars and Stripes have known for months that their publication was on the chopping block, but said their hope remains that pressure from Congress may save their jobs.

In April, Mr. Trump [called Voice of America "disgusting"](#) and urged the Senate to confirm Michael Pack — an ally of Stephen K. Bannon, a former Trump adviser — to head its parent agency. His nomination languished for two years over concerns from Democratic and Republican lawmakers that

he would make federally funded outlets a mouthpiece for the Trump administration.

Since taking over the agency in June, Mr. Pack has [fired the heads](#) of the four media outlets and an internet freedom nonprofit under his purview. He has threatened to [withhold visa approvals](#) for at least 76 foreign journalists at V.O.A., who were recruited to translate news into languages like Swahili and Mandarin, putting many at risk of deportation. In August, he published an [internal report](#) alleging “systemic security failures” within the agency, and then [suspended](#) many of the remaining career officials in his front-office who disagreed with his leadership.

On Monday, [fourteen journalists](#) at Voice of America criticized Mr. Pack for comments he made [in a recent interview](#) saying Voice of America is “a great place to put a foreign spy.” In the interview, Mr. Pack said his goal as head of the agency was to “drain the swamp.”

Pranshu Verma contributed reporting.

From: (b) (6)
To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); (b) (6); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#); [Thad Strom](#); [Frank Wuco](#); (b) (6); [Bill Maloney](#); [Sam Dewey](#); [Robert Patterson](#); [Madeleine Hubbard](#)
Subject: Articles/ICYMI
Date: Friday, October 16, 2020 8:10:52 AM

[Democracy activists stranded after Trump admin pulls funding for anti-censorship tools](#)

Democracy activists facing surveillance in Belarus pleaded for help, but the funding freeze meant a government-backed U.S. nonprofit had to turn them down.

NBC News

October 16, 2020

Dan De Luce

[Court rules Trump appointee overstepped authority when he tried to replace media fund's leadership](#)

Washington Post

October 15, 2020

Paul Farhi

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[Press Release: AG Racine Wins Lawsuit Resolving Leadership Crisis at District Nonprofit Caused by Trump Appointee](#)

The DC Line

October 15, 2020

[Citing Scandal, Senator Proposes Stronger Protections For VOA Newsroom](#)

NPR

October 15, 2020

David Folkenflik

[What The Heck Is Going On At Voice Of America?](#)

This Week in the Swamp: A weekly dive into the muck of the Trump administration.

Talking Points Memo

October 15, 2020

Matt Shuham

American Thinker

October 16, 2020

Lauri B. Regan

[Media](#)

[Court rules Trump appointee overstepped authority when he tried to replace media fund's leadership](#)

By [Paul Farhi](#)

Oct. 15, 2020 at 8:09 p.m. EDT

A District judge has ruled that a Trump appointee overstepped his authority when he fired the board of an agency that helps dissidents and journalists in repressive countries and sought to replace it with his own slate of directors, including himself.

Shortly after taking over as chief executive of the federal agency that supervises the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe and other government-funded media operations in June, [Michael Pack](#) began a sweeping overhaul of the six organizations, firing five of their directors; two others [resigned in anticipation of his cuts](#).

But the board of the [Open Technology Fund](#), which Pack dismissed along with its director, rejected his order, arguing that he didn't have the authority to replace them, and at one point, it blocked Pack's chosen slate of directors and his [new chief executive designee](#) from taking over its offices in the District.

The District's attorney general, which oversees nonprofits in the city, sued on the agency's behalf. And on Wednesday, Superior Court Judge Shana Frost Matini agreed that Pack was not authorized by the fund's bylaws to replace its leadership and that the board Pack has been seeking to replace is the "valid" one at the agency.

A spokesperson for Pack did not respond to a request for comment.

How Trump's obsessions with media and loyalty coalesced in a battle for Voice of America

Although the ruling affirms the existing board's authority, it probably has little application for Voice of America and other entities under control of Pack's U.S. Agency for Global Media because they are chartered under a different set of regulations that gives USAGM greater oversight.

Pack has frozen about half of Open Technology Fund's remaining grant funds for 2020, said Laura Cunningham, the agency's acting chief executive and president. Along with unpaid grants from the prior fiscal year, USAGM has held back about \$20 million, she said, prompting the suspension of about 80 percent of its ongoing projects.

"It seems CEO Pack has a very specific vision about a handful of projects he wants supported," she said, adding that the technology fund "does not want to fund his preferred technologies."

Among those Pack has sought to name to Open Technology Fund's board are himself, his chief of staff and several Trump appointees from other federal agencies. His slate also includes Jonathan Alexandre, senior counsel for governmental affairs at Liberty Counsel Action, an organization [the Southern Poverty Law Center](#) calls "a legal organization advocating for anti-LGBT discrimination under the guise of religious liberty."

With their visas in limbo, journalists at Voice of America worry that they'll be thrown out of America

Pack's confirmation by the Senate followed more than two years of controversy over his nomination by Trump. He finally gained approval after the White House launched [an extraordinary attack on Voice of America](#), alleging it was promoting propaganda by China, Iran and other authoritarian regimes.

Pack has joined in on the criticism, suggesting without evidence that the news service has [harbored foreign spies](#). Last week, his agency denounced Voice of America for publishing “[substandard journalism](#),” though it cited no specific examples.

Separately, five USAGM officials suspended by Pack [sued the agency](#) last week, alleging that he and senior managers have violated the statutory “firewall” that is intended to protect Voice of America’s reporting, and that of other federally funded broadcasters, from political interference. [The lawsuit](#), filed in U.S. District Court in Washington, alleges that Pack has meddled in Voice of America to create coverage more favorable to Trump.

USAGM has said the lawsuit is without merit.

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Articles/ICYMI
Date: Friday, July 10, 2020 8:42:30 AM

[New head of US Global Media wants to refocus VOA](#)

WASHINGTON EXAMINER By Jamie McIntyre

July 9, 2020 - 11:00 PM

[Foreign Nationals at Voice of America Won't Have Visas Renewed Under New Trump-Appointed Boss \(Report\)](#)

The Wrap, Lindsey Ellefson

15 hrs ago

In a statement sent to TheWrap, a spokesperson for the U.S. Agency for Global Media did not say whether the visas would be renewed but that the agency was doing a "case-by-case assessment" of visa-holding "personal services contractors."

"To improve agency management and protect U.S. national security, it is imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused," the spokesperson said. "As such, USAGM is undertaking a comprehensive, case-by-case assessment of personal services contractors (PSCs) who are J-1 visa holders."

['Wildly inappropriate': VOA purge continues as foreign journalists' visas cancelled](#)

Concerns that decision, which comes after the appointment of a Trump loyalist as CEO, could place reporters in danger in their home countries

Julian Borger in Washington

THE GUARDIAN, Fri 10 Jul 2020 05.00 EDT

Media

[Foreign Journalists Working For U.S. Government Broadcasters May Lose Visas](#)

NPR, July 10, 2020 3:02 AM ET

David Folkenflik Mark Katkov

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Articles/ICYMI
Date: Friday, September 4, 2020 9:09:54 AM

[Helsinki Commission Demands Answers on Failure of USAGM to Renew J-1 Visas for Voice of America Journalists](#)

CSCE

September 03, 2020

From: (b) (6)
To: [Diane Cullio](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); (b) (6); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#); [Thad Strom](#); [Frank Wuco](#); (b) (6); [Bill Maloney](#); [Sam Dewey](#); [Robert Patterson](#)
Subject: Articles/ICYMI
Date: Friday, October 9, 2020 8:11:24 AM

[Ex-Officials' Lawsuit Says Trump-Appointed CEO Broke Laws At Voice Of America](#)

NPR

October 8, 2020

David Folkenflik

[Suspended officials sue agency that runs Voice of America](#)

Associated Press

October 9, 2020

[Trump-appointed global media chief sued over allegations of pro-Trump agenda](#)

The Hill

October 8, 2020

Justine Coleman

[U.S. foreign policy might be too broken for Biden to fix](#)

Washington Post

October 8, 2020

Josh Rogin

(FULL TEXT BELOW)

[Trump Appointee Is Turning Voice of America Into Partisan Outlet, Lawsuit Says](#)

Michael Pack, the chief executive of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, and his aides repeatedly meddled in the editorial affairs of Voice of America, the suit says.

New York Times

October 8, 2020

Pranshu Verma

(FULL TEXT BELOW)

[Watchdog Group Sues Trump Administration for Details on Federal Agency Facilitating 'Pro-Trump Propaganda'](#)

Law & Crime
October 8, 2020
Jerry Lambe

[Lawsuit against US Agency for Global Media leadership would bolster editorial independence at international broadcasters](#)

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press
October 8, 2020

[Opinions](#)

[U.S. foreign policy might be too broken for Biden to fix](#)

Washington Post
Opinion by
[Josh Rogin](#)

Columnist

Oct. 8, 2020 at 6:08 p.m. EDT

At Wednesday's [vice-presidential debate](#), Sen. Kamala D. Harris (D-Calif.) responded to a question about the decline of American global leadership by quoting former vice president Joe Biden: "Foreign policy, it might sound complicated, but really it's relationships." If only that were so. Given the damage wreaked by President Trump's mismanagement, Biden and Harris will be hard-pressed to restore the role of the United States in the world — assuming that is even possible.

Trump ran against the Washington foreign policy establishment in 2016 and [is doing](#)

[it again](#) in 2020, attacking the previous bipartisan consensus that the United States has a unique duty to lead a global world order based on the advancement of freedom, human rights and the rule of law. Trump spent his first term focusing narrowly on U.S. interests, a strategy he calls “America First.”

Not only did Trump [reject multilateralism](#), [weaken alliances](#) and [undermine human rights norms](#), he also waged war on the foreign policy establishment inside his own government. Trump’s White House [tried to gut funding](#) for diplomacy, [dismantle](#) independent U.S. international broadcasting and [install political hacks](#) to mismanage the U.S. Agency for International Development. Trump also sows doubt [about the integrity of U.S. democracy](#) and [the credibility of the U.S. intelligence community](#) almost every day.

[Transcript: Columnists’ real-time commentary on the vice-presidential debate](#)

Trump’s team is breaking the tools of foreign policy his successors might need to put it together again. Harris identified the problem, but she didn’t offer much in the way of solutions — aside from building “relationships” — perhaps because they are scarce. It could take decades to repair the institutions Trump intentionally damaged inside our government and around the world.

There is evidence the Biden team is working on this behind the scenes. The campaign has [hundreds](#) of foreign policy “advisers” writing hundreds of memos to one another. The real action, though, is at the top. A small group of former Obama administration officials, lawmakers and a few outsiders have been preparing a fresh approach.

Sen. Christopher A. Coons (D-Del.) told me that a Biden administration won’t try to tackle the large foreign policy issues right away; instead, it will prioritize the domestic need to fight the pandemic. That new pandemic strategy will have an international component, he said, reconnecting the U.S. government with the larger global response.

Next, the Biden administration will “assemble the global network of free societies, of

democracies, of those countries who are willing to lock arms with us, to stand up and say, ‘We are a community of democracies who care about free press, human rights, democracy and the values that distinguish us,’ ” Coons said. “And then, from that position of strength, reengage on climate and nuclear proliferation with Iran and North Korea and confronting China.”

Biden is expecting help from Republicans who profess to believe in those values. He wants to bring together internationalist Democrats and Republicans to resist the protectionist and nativist elements on both the left and the right. “If U.S. policymakers seek to restore a bipartisan consensus favoring American global leadership, they must persuade ordinary Americans that international engagement and alliances are worth the cost,” Coons [wrote Wednesday](#) in Foreign Affairs.

That might be asking too much of a party that will almost certainly be focused on defeating Biden in 2024. The Republicans have reason to see him fail, not to help him undo what happened on their watch. Biden will need a full team of confirmed officials to deploy across the globe, but if Republicans hold the Senate, there’s no reason to expect they will oblige.

[What to know about the 2020 presidential debates](#)

Even if the GOP and the American people can be convinced U.S. global leadership is worth restoring, there’s no assurance the world will go along. Regional hegemony such as Russia and Turkey [are excitedly expanding](#) their spheres of [influence, with deadly consequences](#). China has used these past four years to pitch its alternative vision for a world order, one in which things such as freedom, human rights and democracy are optional.

As President Barack Obama discovered in 2009, the international community might [give you](#) the Nobel Peace Prize, but that doesn’t necessarily mean the issues get solved. Even rebuilding relationships with allies won’t be a cake walk. International groups such as the Group of Seven and the Group of 20 can’t even meet in person anymore because of the pandemic.

The Trump team is leaving Biden, if he wins, a set of problems even more intractable than it found them. Biden can't return to the Iran deal but won't be able to strike a new one. He won't be able to reengage with North Korea or return to Trump's policy of "maximum pressure." Biden likely won't give up the leverage of Trump's China tariffs for nothing, but he will find it extremely hard to wring more concessions out of Beijing.

To be fair to Harris, no campaign is expected to have all the answers in advance — but the questions don't get easier after the election. If Biden wins, the incoming administration is in for a very rough ride. If Trump wins, it might be the nail in the coffin of the U.S.-led global order Biden is pledging to salvage.

Trump Appointee Is Turning Voice of America Into Partisan Outlet, Lawsuit Says

Michael Pack, the chief executive of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, and his aides repeatedly meddled in the editorial affairs of Voice of America, the suit says.

New York Times
October 8, 2020
Pranshu Verma

WASHINGTON — Five officials suspended from the government's global media agency sued its chief executive and top aides on Thursday, claiming they broke the law in repeatedly seeking to turn a news service under its purview into a mouthpiece for pro-Trump propaganda.

The 84-page lawsuit asserts that Michael Pack, the chief executive of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, or his aides have interrogated journalists at the Voice of America who have censured Mr. Pack or written articles top officials believed were critical of

President Trump, instilling fear across the agency.

Mr. Pack's aide, Samuel E. Dewey, for example, began a retaliatory investigation against the Voice of America's White House bureau chief, Steve Herman, after he [signed a letter](#) in August saying Mr. Pack risked "crippling" the news outlet.

As part of that investigation, Mr. Dewey and another aide scrutinized Mr. Herman's "private social media activity for any hint of bias" against Mr. Trump, compiling a 30-page dossier that they sent to Voice of America's top executive "in a clear effort to pressure the acting director to take action."

In another episode, Mr. Dewey pressed the chief of Voice of America's Urdu service over whether it had published enough content about civil unrest over the summer that highlighted the effect of what he described as "mass rioting."

Mr. Dewey demanded to know if the news service had covered statements by Attorney General William P. Barr about "those who lived in underserved communities and had their property damaged." Mr. Trump and his supporters have repeatedly tried to cast protests against police brutality and racial inequality as riots and looting.

The lawsuit, [reported earlier by NPR](#), claims those instances violated a firewall provision that prevents Mr. Pack or his aides at the U.S. Agency for Global Media from meddling in the editorial affairs of Voice of America, or the other news outlets it oversees. The plaintiffs also said those interventions highlighted a core truth about working at the Voice of America under Mr. Pack's leadership.

"Journalists are safe where they favor the administration but not where they don't," the lawsuit states.

Representatives from the U.S. Agency for Global Media did not immediately return a request for comment.

Since taking office in June, Mr. Pack thrust his relatively unknown agency into the spotlight. In one of his first moves, he swiftly fired the heads of the four news outlets and an internet technology nonprofit under his oversight. He also replaced the bipartisan board that supervises the organizations with allies of the Trump administration.

Since then, Mr. Pack has purged staff critical of his leadership; starved organizations he oversees from basic funding; and threatened to [withhold visa approvals](#) for at least 76 foreign journalists at the Voice of America who now may be deported because he has deemed them a “security risk.”

Critics of Mr. Pack assert he has run the agency in an authoritarian manner: finding any issue that confirms his perception of liberal bias at the organization and doling out punishment in ways that intimidate employees who have been critical of the Trump administration.

“This is very Stalinist,” said Bricio Segovia, a former White House correspondent for V.O.A.’s Spanish language TV service, who left the agency last month. “When you have people acting out of fear, that’s actually how most companies work in countries like Russia.”

One of the most glaring examples, plaintiffs said, occurred in late July, when a [two-minute video](#) posted on the news outlet’s Urdu-language website featured former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. urging Muslim Americans to vote and criticizing Mr. Trump for his “Muslim ban.”

The video was a clear breach of the outlet’s editorial standards, but it also presented Mr. Pack the ability to send a message, plaintiffs said. Mr. Pack’s top advisers participated in an investigation into the clip — once again circumventing the agency’s firewall provisions. Shortly after the investigation concluded, the four journalists involved were fired.

Aside from violating editorial guidelines, others have said Mr. Pack has also threatened his agency's ability to combat disinformation across the globe.

Mr. Pack has withheld nearly \$20 million in funding to the Open Technology Fund, an internet freedom group that his agency oversees. The fund helped create encryption products — like Signal and Tor — used by over two billion people in 60 countries. Now, it has been forced to suspend 80 percent of its projects, many of which allow citizens in China, Iran, Venezuela and Belarus to [circumvent stringent government firewalls](#) and read uncensored news, according to internet freedom groups.

As the critiques of Mr. Pack have grown, Democrats and even some Republicans [are becoming increasingly furious](#) by Mr. Pack's leadership.

“He's the wrong person for the job,” said Representative Eliot L. Engel, Democrat of New York and the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. “He should resign. And if he doesn't, the president should fire him.”

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Articles/ICYMI
Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 8:17:08 AM

[At Voice of America, Trump Appointee Sought Political Influence Over Coverage](#)

NPR

September 2, 2020

David Folkenflik

[Voice Of America Journalists Protest Trump Appointee's Actions](#)

NPR

September 1, 2020

David Folkenflik

[Voice of America staff rebel over new CEO's comments](#)

Columbia Journalism Review

September 1, 2020

By Mathew Ingram

[Scoop: Open Technology Fund asks Inspector General to investigate](#)

AXIOS

September 1, 2020

Sara Fischer

[New Voice of America overseer called foreign journalists a security risk. Now the staff is revolting.](#)

Washington Post

September 2, 2020

Sarah Ellison and Paul Farhi

Since becoming the overseer of Voice of America in June, Michael Pack has fired subordinates, disbanded advisory boards and [declined to renew the visas of foreign journalists who work under him](#).

Political appointees frequently make personnel changes when they take on a new role. But Pack, who heads the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), has offered a unique justification for his actions: He is rooting out potential spies.

In a memo to staff last month, Pack suggested that his purges are part of an effort to shore up lax personnel standards that have left VOA vulnerable to foreign espionage. His predecessors “ignored common national security protocols and essential government human resources practices,” he wrote. He put it more bluntly last week in an interview with the Federalist, a conservative commentary site: “It’s a great place to put a foreign spy.”

Yet Pack has presented no evidence that anyone at VOA is a foreign intelligence agent. Nor has he explained why VOA and sister agencies such as Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Asia — media organizations that don’t control sensitive government information — would be an appealing target for penetration by a hostile power.

Now, a segment of staffers who had seethed quietly over Pack’s attempts to reshape the agencies are in open revolt over his unsupported accusations about “spies.” The goals behind the transformations he has pushed for remain murky — although he has said he wants to ensure that VOA [“presents the policies of the United States clearly and effectively.”](#) some staffers say this means a realignment with Trump White House messaging. Pack declined interview requests through his spokesman, who also declined to respond to this story on the record.

On Monday, 14 senior journalists at VOA sent a letter to acting director Elez Biberaj protesting Pack’s actions, which they said harmed the agency’s mission and endangered its reporters.

“Mr. Pack has made a thin excuse that his actions are meant to protect national security, but just as was the case with the McCarthy ‘Red Scare,’ which targeted VOA and other government organizations in the mid-1950s, there has not been a single demonstrable case of any individual working for VOA — as the USAGM CEO puts it — ‘posing as a spy,’” they wrote.

They argued that the claims throw a blanket of suspicion over their organization, which since World War II has sought to deliver objective news and information to countries where press freedom is limited or nonexistent. They also say it could endanger VOA journalists working abroad: Terrorists and rogue regimes have used bogus accusations of spying as a pretext for the arrest or murder of journalists for decades.

After the letter was first published by [NPR](#), at least a dozen more VOA journalists added their names to it, according to two VOA journalists. The letter seemed to trigger an explosion of tension that had been building inside the Washington-based organization since Pack began making sweeping changes.

How Trump's obsessions with media and loyalty coalesced in a battle for Voice of America

"So much of this story has evolved around anonymous sources and innuendo," Joe Bruns, a former acting director of Voice of America in the 1990s, said in an interview. "I admire their courage for putting their names and careers on the line."

USAGM said [on its spokesman's Twitter account](#) that it would not respond directly to the letter because it was "improper" and "failed to follow procedure." Instead, the leadership of USAGM and VOA "are handling the choice of complaint transmission as an administrative issue," which suggested that the journalists could face sanctions for their letter.

The VOA journalists' letter came shortly after Bricio Segovia, White House correspondent for VOA's Spanish-language service, [claimed](#) that he had been censored by the agency for attempting to publish an interview in which he asked a White House official about the lack of visa renewals for some foreign-born journalists at VOA. Pack has declined to renew the visas of foreign nationals, potentially [forcing dozens of VOA journalists to return](#) to their home countries and face retaliation for working for an agency affiliated with the U.S. government. Segovia's visa is among those facing imminent expiration.

"Is the White House aware of this situation, and if so, is it willing to act?" Segovia asked Mauricio Claver-Carone, a special assistant to the president and a senior director for Latin America at the National Security Council, during a wider-ranging interview Friday.

Claver-Carone suggested that the visa renewals had been delayed by the coronavirus pandemic, but added, "We are watching the situation and I hope it gets resolved as soon as possible."

Segovia followed up by asking whether the White House would be willing to apply some pressure "so that Mr. Michael Pack authorizes these visa extensions, since now the journalistic duty of this group of professionals is being suppressed with no reason provided and with a case-by-case review that has seen no evolution and has not been explained?"

"We value the journalistic duty that you and all VOA journalists do and we will have that conversation," Claver-Carone concluded.

Segovia emailed that excerpt from the interview to the central news division of the language services on Friday. By that evening, Amy Katz, senior executive producer for VOA, replied to Segovia and the entire Washington news group: "Dear Colleagues, Please DO NOT use this interview on any platforms. If you have already used it, please let us know as soon as possible."

But the unedited interview was shared via a tweet Saturday morning, which several VOA journalists said was probably due to the fact that weekend tweets are often scheduled in advance. By that afternoon, "the original text and video were altered. All reference to VOA journalists' situation was

deleted,” Segovia explained in his own Twitter thread Saturday.

He responded to Katz’s message by asking why the interview would not be aired, but quickly learned that his username no longer worked for VOA’s email or publishing systems, he explained on Twitter on Saturday afternoon.

The various agencies under the umbrella group of USAGM have been in a state of upheaval ever since the confirmation of Pack, a documentary filmmaker whose nomination was promoted by former White House top adviser Stephen K. Bannon. “He’s my guy, and I pushed him hard,” Bannon [told The Washington Post](#) in June.

Pack, who was confirmed after a two-year battle, was in his role for mere days before he stunned five of the media agencies under his control by firing their top officials via a brief email sent after business hours. Two top officials at VOA had resigned days earlier, anticipating the purges.

Board members of one of those media agencies, the Open Technology Fund, recently asked the U.S. Office of Inspector General to investigate Pack’s office for breaching provisions meant to protect the agencies under its control from political interference, Karen Kornbluh, the board chair, told The Post.

An appeals court issued an injunction preventing Pack from dismissing the fund’s board and chief executive. The Open Technology Fund also brought another suit in federal claims court, claiming that Pack’s withholding of funds that Congress had allocated to it violated the Open Technology Fund contract with USAGM.

“It is critically important to maintain the independence of the journalistic organizations, as well as OTF, which must work independently with civil society to ensure unfettered access to the Internet,” Kornbluh said.

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Articles/ICYMI
Date: Friday, August 21, 2020 4:45:27 PM

[House Foreign Affairs chair: US media agency chief 'has much to answer for'](#)

The Hill

August 21, 2020

Rafael Bernal

[US Lawmaker Demands Answers On VOA Journalists' Expiring Visas](#)

UrduPoint

Sat 22nd August 2020 | 01:20 AM

Muhammad Irfan

[Bannon joins the long list of people Trump pretends to barely know](#)

After Steve Bannon's indictment, Trump didn't literally say, "Steve, who?" but he came close.

MSNBC

August 21, 2020

Steve Benen

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Articles/ICYMI
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:02:25 PM

[Court Tells Trumpian Head Of US Agency For Global Media That He Can't Fire People From The Open Tech Fund \(At Least For Now\)](#)

from the keep-your-hands-off dept

Techdirt, Tue, Jul 21st 2020 12:17pm — Mike Masnick

Politics

[Trump Media Agency Chief Blocked in Court Over Mass Firings](#)

Bloomberg, By David Yaffe-Bellany

July 21, 2020, 10:49 AM EDT Updated on July 21, 2020, 11:19 AM EDT

[Court Blocks Pack Replacement of OTF Leadership](#)

Reinstates internet freedom directors, said USAGM CEO likely did not have authority

Multichannel News, JOHN EGGERTON, July 21, 2020

[Appeals court blocks Trump appointee's takeover of web nonprofit](#)

The court dealt a setback to ex-filmmaker Michael Pack's drive to overhaul U.S.- government-funded media.

POLITICO, By JOSH GERSTEIN and DANIEL LIPPMAN

07/21/2020 11:06 AM EDT

Press Release: James Lankford United States Senator for Oklahoma

07.21.20

[Lankford, Kaine Introduce Bill to Combat Internet Censorship in Hong Kong](#)

WASHINGTON, DC — Senators James Lankford (R-OK) and Tim Kaine (D-VA) today introduced the [Safeguarding Internet Freedom in Hong Kong Act](#). The legislation pushes back on China's aggressive actions to undermine Hong Kong's autonomy and freedom. The bill comes after the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) passed a sweeping security law that threatens the freedoms of the people of Hong Kong, including their access to the internet and ability to share information online. Lankford and Kaine's legislation would bolster firewall circumvention infrastructure in Hong Kong and restore freedoms to the people of Hong Kong unfairly targeted by the CCP.

[Appeals court blocks Trump administration takeover of organization fighting digital censorship and surveillance](#)

Washington Post, By [Spencer S. Hsu](#)

July 21, 2020 at 3:42 PM EDT

A federal appeals court in Washington issued a rare emergency injunction Tuesday, blocking staffing changes that the Trump administration's [new head of the Voice of America made](#) to a U.S. organization that protects digital speech worldwide.

In a bluntly worded two-page order, a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit warned that [actions taken by Michael Pack](#), a conservative filmmaker and associate of former White House chief strategist Stephen K. Bannon, could endanger activists under repressive governments who rely on the Open Technology Fund to combat Internet censorship and surveillance.

Pack [had fired](#) the technology group's top officials and bipartisan board since being confirmed June 4 as chief executive of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, which oversees Voice of America and four U.S. government-funded news outlets: the Open Technology Fund, Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Asia and Middle East Broadcasting Networks.

Seven U.S. senators, including Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.), wrote Pack expressing "deep concern" about the staff cuts he has ordered. Republican House members have also aired misgivings, and four existing board members, including two former U.S. ambassadors, filed suit to halt the changes.

[A lower court said earlier in the case](#) that international broadcasting sponsored by the United States for nearly 80 years has served as a "trusted and authoritative news global news source" and model of journalistic evidence that has helped to undermine and topple some of history's most oppressive regimes.

"The defendant, Michael Pack — is accused of putting this legacy at serious risk," the lower court said.

In [Tuesday's order](#), U.S. Circuit Judges David S. Tatel, Thomas B. Griffith, Patricia A. Millett ruled that it appeared Pack did not have statutory authority to appoint or control the fund's board members or operations.

In staying Pack's changes pending "highly expedited" appeal, the judges said existing board members who filed suit showed that "the government's actions have jeopardized OTF's relationships with its partner organizations, leading its partner organizations to fear for their safety."

The court said the fund also would face “an increasing risk that its decision-making will be taken over by the government,” undermining its reputation and effectiveness.

[Read the court’s order here](#)

The Justice Department declined to comment. Spokesmen for the U.S. Agency for Global Media did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In lobbying for Pack’s confirmation, Trump and the White House portrayed Voice of America as an out-of-control news organization that has distributed “[propaganda](#)” favorable to regimes in China and Iran — a claim vigorously disputed by VOA. Pack’s team in news statements has defended some changes, citing “obstructionism” that held up his nomination, “bias and partisanship” and unspecified but “known mismanagement and scandals that have plagued the agency for decades.”

Begun as a Radio Free Asia pilot project in 2012, the Open Technology Fund has grown into an independent nonprofit grantee of the Agency for Global Media, incorporated last year and appropriated \$20million by Congress.

The group has funded programs in 60 countries with more than 2 billion people to allow secure and uncensored access to U.S. information sources and the broader Internet — through tools such as the encrypted communications app Signal and the anonymous Web-accessing network Tor — despite authoritarian government controls. It has also worked to protect journalists, sources and consumers from digital attack and aided researchers and technology developers.

In an interview, plaintiffs’ attorney Deepak Gupta said: “We’re thrilled that the court recognized today that the federal government does not have the power to take over this independent, nonprofit organization. This is critically important because many of the people who rely on Open Technology Fund’s work are activists and journalists in repressive regimes — in places like Tehran and Hong Kong — and they can’t afford to lose that support while this case proceeds.”

Pack’s critics warned that activists and technology developers who work with the fund take great risks by revealing their identities to it, making it essential that the group remain independent of the U.S. government in perception and reality. The suit alleged that Pack’s aggressive moves to obtain physical access to and control of the fund’s office has caused some to question their security and “the potential for [their] data to be obtained by a hostile actor.”

The appeals panel ruling overturned a July 2 [denial by Chief U.S. District Judge Beryl A. Howell](#)

[of Washington of a temporary restraining order](#) sought by plaintiffs.

Howell found that if Pack's actions turn out to be misguided, diminishing the U.S. global presence and strengthening totalitarian governments, accountability for the changes at the media agencies rest "at the ballot box."

The appeals court's decision came one day after D.C. Attorney General Karl A. Racine (D) brought a separate lawsuit in D.C. Superior Court under his office's authority to protect District nonprofit groups and their assets, asserting Pack illegally removed the fund's board and certain officers.

The plaintiffs are board members Pack moved to replace June 17: former ambassadors Ryan C. Crocker and Karen Kornbluh, public relations executive Michael W. Kempner and Democratic technology policy adviser Ben Scott.

[Voice of America faces loss of international journalists as new overseer lets visas expire](#)

[After departure of Voice of America editors, new Trump-appointed overseer fires heads of four sister organizations](#)

[Undaunted, U.S. global media chief plows ahead with changes](#)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Articles/ICYMI
Date: Thursday, July 16, 2020 10:31:26 AM

POLITICO

[POLITICO China Watcher](#)

What's next in U.S.-China relations.

By DAVID WERTIME 07/16/2020 08:48 AM EDT

Defunding the Department of Soft Power: The Trump-appointed head of the U.S. Agency for Global Media **Michael Pack** [fired](#) the head of Radio Free Asia, **Bay Fang**, last week, and on the same day [announced](#) foreign journalists at RFA, Voice of America, and other U.S. outlets under its control will not get their visas extended. The taxpayer-funded outlets have drawn accolades for their hard-hitting journalism on China, including reporting and cataloging human rights abuses there with more persistence than many profit-making outlets. Many of their journalists hail from overseas, and have often done reporting that could put them in danger in their home countries.

[pls. see full tweets in original article]

[PostEverything](#)

[The beclowning of the executive branch during a pandemic](#)

No big deal, just the deconstruction of the American state

By [Daniel W. Drezner](#)

Daniel W. Drezner is a professor of international politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and a regular contributor to [PostEverything](#).

Washington Post, July 16, 2020 at 7:00 AM EDT

One of the problems with being inundated with waves of executive branch incompetence is that ordinary citizens and outside observers become inured to it.

To be clear, this does not imply public acceptance of the incompetence — the [polling is clear](#) that Americans are [sick and tired](#) of the United States winning the coronavirus infection

race and not in the good way. What it means is that the waves of calamity run so regular and so deep that it is truly impossible to keep up with everything.

The hard-working staff here at Spoiler Alerts has an occasional feature of how the Trump White House is [beclowning](#) the federal government. It's time for an update of the omnishambles.

The most appropriate place to start is in the White House's continuing placement of D-listers into the federal government. On Wednesday, the White House [announced](#) that Trump intended to nominate [Everyone's Favorite PhD](#), Sebastian Gorka, to serve on the [National Security Education Board](#). Gorka's qualifications for this seat are [dubious at best](#), but the most insane part of this is that it is a four-year term.

Gorka's persuasive abilities are nonexistent, so his actual effect on, well, anything of substance will be minimal. Still, one must pity the other members of that board for having to deal with this buffoon until 2023.

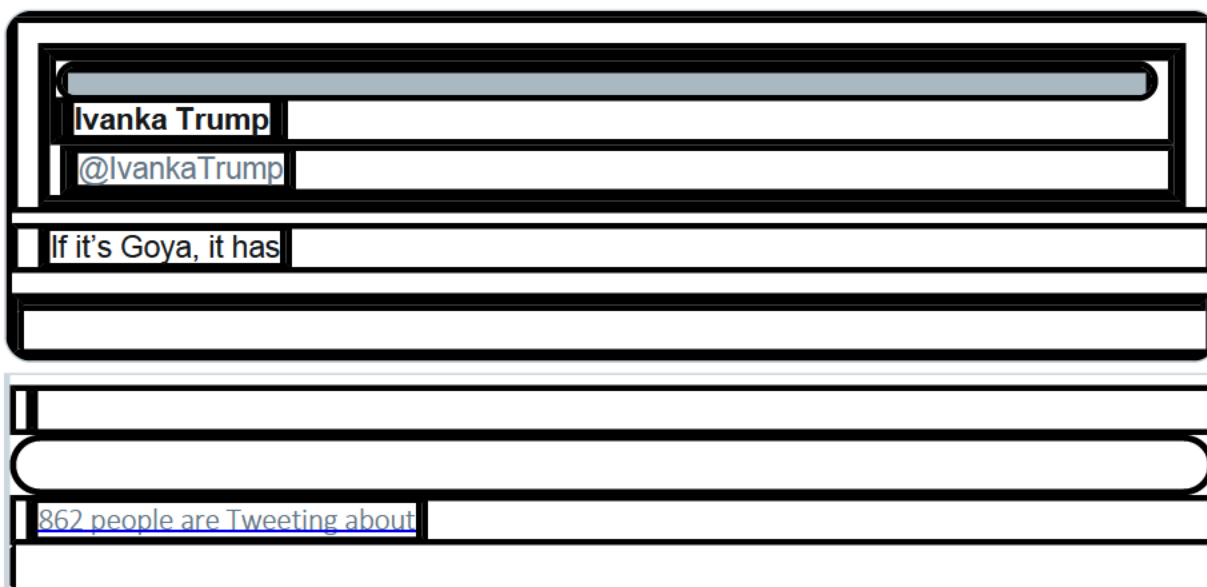
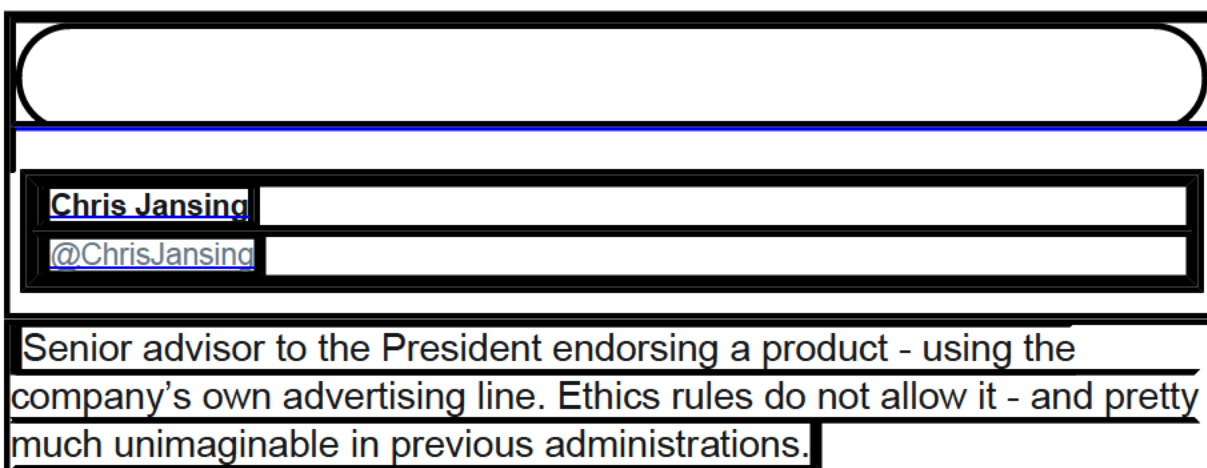
Gorka is a joke. Trump's new head of the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), Michael Pack, has taken less amusing actions, however. Pack, a Stephen K. Bannon partner, oversees Voice of America and other USAGM media outlets that broadcast overseas.

Since the GOP-controlled Senate approved his appointment in [a party-line vote last month under murky circumstances](#), Pack has been busy. He [fired the directors](#) of four of the media outlets under his control, leading to [bipartisan](#) outrage on Capitol Hill. This has not deterred Pack in the slightest, as he has [continued to fire a bevy of editors and governing board members](#).

[According to NPR](#), "Dozens of foreign nationals working as journalists in the U.S. for Voice of America, the federal government's international broadcaster, will not have their visas extended once they expire." Pack seems [super-eager not to renew these visas](#) either. As The Post [noted in an editorial](#) last week, this move could "put the current VOA foreign employees in danger, if they are forced to return to countries whose regimes disapprove of VOA reports. ... Mr. Pack's actions could put the personal security of dozens of journalists at risk, along with the reputation and integrity of the VOA itself." Pack is, alas, not nearly as funny as Gorka.

Perhaps Pack is simply trying to follow the lead of Ivanka Trump, the White House staffer who rolled out a new White House employment initiative telling unemployed workers to "find something new." As my Post colleague [Hamza Shaban reported](#), asking the president's daughter to be the point person on this "was swiftly derided on social media as 'clueless' and 'tone-deaf' given the pandemic, recession and Trump's own familial employment history."

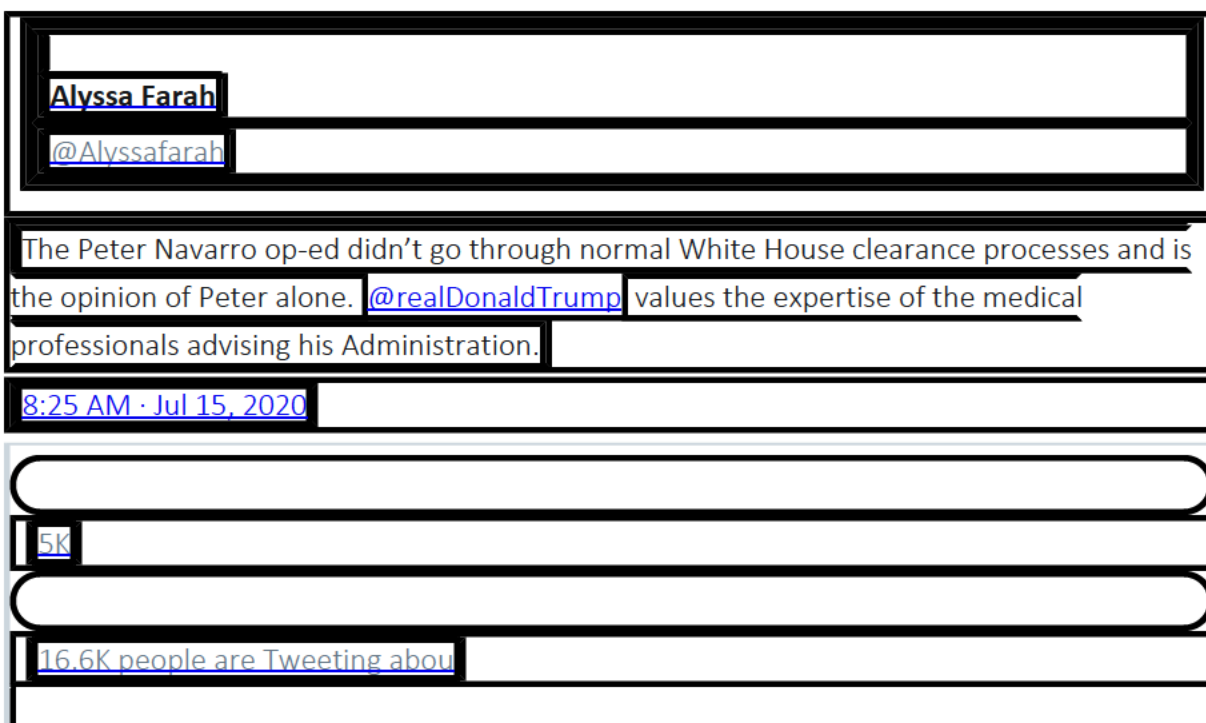
Ivanka Trump successfully moved on from that fiasco to an entirely new fiasco:



Ivanka is a joke; Peter Navarro is a more malevolent joke. Inspired by a futile [Trump-inspired](#) White House effort to bring Anthony S. Fauci down a peg or two, the White House trade adviser ill-advisedly [wrote a USA Today op-ed](#) that claimed the National Institutes of Health doctor “has been wrong about everything I have interacted with him on.” Readers will be shocked to hear that the man who [cannot negotiate his way out of any trade conflict](#) was [a bit fact-challenged](#) in his argument.

If [this is what Navarro thinks is right](#), then I will take Fauci being wrong every day of the week and twice on Sundays. Indeed, the op-ed was so absurdly over-the-top that it actually forced

the White House to walk it back:



Trump's staffing decisions are bad, but his policy decisions are nothing short of baffling. On Tuesday, Immigration and Customs Enforcement [rescinded a rule](#) it had issued just a week earlier that would have prohibited foreign students from staying in the country if their courses had been online only. This was a stupid and capricious rule to issue in the first place and was immediately met with [lawsuits](#). Even the Trump administration seemed to realize that it had screwed up. It will still [do damage](#), however.

The administration's inept handling of covid-19 continues unabated. There are [international tensions](#) to be sure, but as the number of infections continues to mushroom, the administration's response has been to ... rejigger the control over data. According to the [New York Times's Sheryl Gay Stolberg](#):

The Trump administration has ordered hospitals to bypass the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and send all Covid-19 patient information to a central database in Washington beginning on Wednesday. The move has alarmed health experts who fear the data will be politicized or withheld from the public. ...

Officials say the change will streamline data gathering and assist the White House coronavirus task force in allocating scarce supplies like personal protective gear and remdesivir, the first drug shown to be effective against the virus. But the Health and Human Services database that will receive new information is not open to the public, which could affect the work of scores of researchers, modelers and health officials who rely on C.D.C. data to make projections and crucial decisions. ...

Public health experts have long expressed concerns that the Trump administration is politicizing science and undermining its health experts, in particular the C.D.C.; four of the agency's former directors, spanning both Republican and Democratic administrations, said as much in an opinion piece published Tuesday in The Washington Post. The data collection shift reinforced those fears.

If you read the whole thing, you will see that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is far from perfect in its data collection. The Trump administration has generated [zero trust](#) in its ability to do anything in a nonpartisan fashion, however. It seems difficult to interpret this as anything but a political move to remove transparency from politically salient information.

There's more — the [slow-motion destruction of the Postal Service](#), the [complete lack of preparedness](#) for another pandemic and the general [erosion of America's standing in the world](#). But another 2,000 words on this will be an exercise in the law of diminishing marginal returns. It is instead worth remembering that all of this [incompetence and malfeasance starts with the president](#).

Exhibit A of where the executive branch is under this president was on display Tuesday, when Trump gave [a White House news conference](#) that, as [the New York Times's Peter Baker noted](#), called some to question the president's mental faculties:

What followed instead was an hour of presidential stream of consciousness as Mr. Trump drifted seemingly at random from one topic to another, often in the same run-on sentence. Even for a president who rarely sticks to the script and wanders from thought to thought, it was one of the most rambling performances of his presidency.

He weighed in on China and the coronavirus and the Paris climate change accord and crumbling highways. And then China again and military spending and then China again and then the coronavirus again. And the economy and energy taxes and trade with Europe and illegal immigration and his friendship with Mexico's president. And the coronavirus again and then

immigration again and crime in Chicago and the death penalty and back to climate change and education and historical statues. And more.

“We could go on for days,” he said at one point, and it sounded plausible.

There is a lot going on in the rest of the world, and I am sick and tired of writing about the Trump administration’s [serial incompetence](#).

In theory, this comes to an end in January. My concern is that what started as [the erosion of the American state](#) in 2017 is accelerating into its irreversible destruction.

With this much beclowning, six months feels like an eternity.

[Daniel Drezner](#)

Daniel W. Drezner is a professor of international politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and a regular contributor to PostEverything. [Follow](#)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Articles/ICYMI
Date: Monday, July 13, 2020 4:48:30 PM

[Voice of America visa review could put journalists at risk](#)

CPI, July 13, 2020 3:34 PM EDT

[An Abuse of Power](#)

Martha Bayles

The new head of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, ostensibly dedicated to furthering American principles, is now endangering brave journalists who have spent their careers defending them.

.....

The American Interest, *Published on: July 13, 2020*

Martha Bayles teaches humanities at Boston College and is the author of *Through a Screen Darkly: Popular Culture, Public Diplomacy, and America's Image Abroad* (Yale University Press, 2014). She is a contributing editor at *The American Interest*.

From: (b) (6)
To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); (b) (6); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#); [Thad Strom](#); [Frank Wuco](#); (b) (6); [Bill Maloney](#); [Sam Dewey](#); [Robert Patterson](#); [Madeleine Hubbard](#)
Subject: Articles/ICYMI
Date: Wednesday, October 28, 2020 8:16:36 AM

[PEN AMERICA REJECTS PROPOSED DHS VISA CHANGES FOR FOREIGN NATIONALS](#)

Proposed rule change would limit ability for journalists, students to live and work in the U.S.

PEN AMERICA

October 27, 2020

[Trump aims to warp the Voice of America into a propaganda tool](#)

The Washington Post

October 27, 2020

Editorial Board

[full text below]

[Pushback as Trump appointee tries to control VOA](#)

AFP

October 27, 2020

[Trump appointee sparks bipartisan furor for politicizing media agency](#)

The Hill

October 27, 2020

Laura Kelly

[USAGM CEO Criticized Over Move to Rescind Firewall Regulation](#)

VOA News

October 27, 2020

Jessica Jerreat

[Right-wing misinformation machine could gain steam post-election](#)

AXIOS

October 28, 2020

Sara Fischer

[Trump-appointed USAGM CEO removes agency's firewall protections](#)

AXIOS

October 27, 2020

Sara Fischer

[Fears of crackdown on US journalism as Trump ally removes editorial 'firewall'](#)

Outrage as USAGM chief Michael Pack rescinds rule that insulates journalists from editorial direction of politically appointed bosses

The Guardian

October 27, 2020

[The Post's View](#) Opinion

[Trump aims to warp the Voice of America into a propaganda tool](#)

Opinion by [Editorial Board](#)

Oct. 27, 2020 at 7:06 p.m. EDT

THE U.S. government's international broadcasting has long had one big advantage over its Russian and Chinese competition: a commitment to independent journalism, rather than official propaganda. [Voice of America](#), [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#) and other outlets are staffed by professionals who deliver unbiased news reports, including about the U.S. government, earning them credibility and influence with audiences around the world — especially in countries that lack free media.

President Trump is bent on destroying that legacy. Last spring, infuriated by VOA's failure to echo his hyperbolic rhetoric about the "China virus," he bullied reluctant

Republican senators into confirming his highly partisan nominee to head the [U.S. Agency for Global Media](#) (USAGM), which oversees U.S. broadcasting. That official, Michael Pack, immediately embarked on a purge of the journalistic leadership of the organizations; he also refused to [renew visas](#) of dozens of foreign journalists who work for them.

Now Mr. Pack has launched a direct assault on the journalistic code that has been the U.S. calling card. Late Monday night, he unilaterally issued [an order](#) he said [revoked](#) a USAGM regulation creating a “firewall” between management and the journalism of the networks. His objection is to the rule’s prohibition of “attempts” by USAGM executives “to direct, pressure, coerce, threaten, interfere with, or otherwise impermissibly influence any of the USAGM Networks . . . in the performance of their journalistic and broadcasting duties.”

Mr. Pack would like to do all those things in advancement of his aim to repress reporting that might offend the White House. For example, he already ordered [an investigation](#) of veteran VOA reporter Steve Herman for supposed anti-Trump bias. Mr. Herman’s sin was to report, accurately, that Vice President Pence had failed to wear a mask during a visit to the Mayo Clinic. The probe was a blatant violation of the firewall that Mr. Pack now says he has dismantled. In a [memo to staff](#), he unabashedly said he acted so that he could “enforce consequences for . . . biased reporting.”

Unfortunately for Mr. Trump’s minion, the independence of VOA’s journalism is guaranteed not just by the regulation he said he repealed but also by a law passed by Congress, which [mandates](#) the “professional independence and integrity” of U.S. broadcasting. But Mr. Pack is not much deterred by legal barriers. According to a half-dozen [whistleblowers who filed a complaint](#) with the State Department’s inspector general, he has improperly diverted funds, sidelined executives who told him he was violating the law and tried to investigate the voting history of USAGM employees.

Mr. Pack has drawn bipartisan criticism from both houses of Congress — which he reacted to by [ignoring a subpoena](#) to testify to a House committee. On Tuesday, the

senior Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Rep. Michael McCaul (Tex.), [tweeted](#) that “it is unclear why CEO Pack is opposed to journalistic objectivity at USAGM and its networks. Without it, the mission and effectiveness of the agency is undermined.” In fact, Mr. Pack’s motives appear perfectly clear: He wishes to turn U.S. broadcasting into a pro-Trump propaganda operation. Unless Mr. Trump is defeated and Mr. Pack removed, the unique power of U.S. foreign broadcasting will likely be destroyed.

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Articles/ICYMI
Date: Friday, July 10, 2020 8:42:30 AM

[New head of US Global Media wants to refocus VOA](#)

WASHINGTON EXAMINER By Jamie McIntyre

July 9, 2020 - 11:00 PM

[Foreign Nationals at Voice of America Won't Have Visas Renewed Under New Trump-Appointed Boss \(Report\)](#)

The Wrap, Lindsey Ellefson

15 hrs ago

In a statement sent to TheWrap, a spokesperson for the U.S. Agency for Global Media did not say whether the visas would be renewed but that the agency was doing a "case-by-case assessment" of visa-holding "personal services contractors."

"To improve agency management and protect U.S. national security, it is imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused," the spokesperson said. "As such, USAGM is undertaking a comprehensive, case-by-case assessment of personal services contractors (PSCs) who are J-1 visa holders."

['Wildly inappropriate': VOA purge continues as foreign journalists' visas cancelled](#)

Concerns that decision, which comes after the appointment of a Trump loyalist as CEO, could place reporters in danger in their home countries

Julian Borger in Washington

THE GUARDIAN, Fri 10 Jul 2020 05.00 EDT

Media

[Foreign Journalists Working For U.S. Government Broadcasters May Lose Visas](#)

NPR, July 10, 2020 3:02 AM ET

David Folkenflik Mark Katkov

From: (b) (6)
To: [Diane Cullio](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); (b) (6); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#); [Thad Strom](#); [Frank Wuco](#); (b) (6)
Subject: [\(b\) \(6\) Bill Maloney](#); [Sam Dewey](#); [Robert Patterson](#)
Date: Articles/ICYMI
Tuesday, October 13, 2020 8:24:17 AM

[Scoop: USAGM soliciting OTF partners as it withholds funds](#)

AXIOS

October 13, 2020

Sara Fischer, author of Media Trends

[Trump's continuing vandalism of the Voice of America](#)

Washington Post

October 11, 2020

Jackson Diehl

(FULL TEXT BELOW)

[Lawsuit Calls for Immediate Relief from USAGM CEO's Actions](#)

VOA News

October 9, 2020

Jessica Jerreat

[Trump-appointed global media chief sued over allegations of pro-Trump agenda](#)

The Hill

October 8, 2020

Justine Coleman

[Opinions](#)

[Trump's continuing vandalism of the Voice of America](#)

Opinion by [Jackson Diehl](#)

Deputy Editorial Page Editor

Oct. 11, 2020 at 5:20 p.m. EDT

President Trump's reelection campaign may be foundering, but his vandalism of key U.S. government institutions is gaining momentum. Senior officials who resisted his political interference have been purged; career professionals have been driven out and replaced by MAGA hacks. Even if Trump loses the election and is forced to leave office, the damage he inflicts between now and January may be ruinous.

Take, as an example, the [U.S. Agency for Global Media](#) (USAGM), which oversees international broadcasting, including the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and separate operations for the Middle East, Cuba and Asia. Though many Americans are barely aware of them, these organizations have played an essential role in promoting U.S. influence and values in the rest of the world. Their calling card — what distinguishes them from their better-resourced Russian and Chinese counterparts — is their commitment to professional, unbiased journalism, including their coverage of the U.S. government.

That has made them a target for Trump, who has been infuriated that the Voice of America doesn't echo his unhinged rhetoric about the "China virus," or that its White House reporter would dare to [report on](#) Vice President Pence's failure to wear a mask. Taking advantage of a 2016 "reform" that unwisely gave the White House authority to directly appoint a chief executive of U.S. international broadcasting, Trump named [Michael Pack](#), an associate of his former aide and alt-right propagandist Stephen K. Bannon.

For two years, the Senate resisted Pack's confirmation. But last spring, Trump finally succeeded in bullying Republican senators into installing his loyalist into USAGM's top job. The immediate result was an [assault on the professional staff](#), funding and journalistic integrity of the agency so sweeping and reckless that even some of those GOP senators have come to regret it. But it may be too late.

Pack started by [firing the heads of four of the organizations](#); the two top editors of the fifth, the Voice of America, resigned as he arrived. He ousted the diplomats and media professionals on oversight boards and replaced them with low-level Trumpists from other government agencies. Two of the top editors he fired, Jamie Fly of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Alberto Fernandez of the Middle East Broadcasting Networks, are Republicans. Not good enough: They were not MAGA militants. Pack said he was on a mission to “drain the swamp” and combat the “deep state.”

It soon became clear what that meant. Having driven off the American media professionals at VOA, Pack went after the more than 70 foreign journalists who work for the organization, refusing to support the renewal of their U.S. visas as they came up. He claimed to be acting for security reasons and insinuated, on no evidence, that some of the staff were spies.

This was slander against highly capable journalists, many of them exiles from autocratic countries who came to VOA so they could report honestly on their homelands. Now, they are being forced to repatriate, in some cases at personal risk. A [VOA report](#) in late August said 15 were returning home and another 20 had visas that will expire by the end of the year.

They weren't Pack's only targets. He attempted to fire the board and cut off the funding of the [Open Technology Fund](#), an organization that supports Internet freedom initiatives, such as tools to circumvent firewalls. A court blocked the firings, but the fund was forced to suspend 49 of its 60 projects. Among those affected were journalists and activists resisting government crackdowns in Hong Kong and in Belarus.

When senior officials objected to Pack's purges or pointed out that he was violating a law prohibiting interference in the outlets' journalism, he sidelined them. Six of the officials have since filed a [whistleblower complaint](#) with the State Department's inspector general. It makes for chilling reading: Pack, they allege, illegally diverted funds, ignored congressional reporting requirements, and sought to investigate the voting histories of USAGM employees.

Then there's the case of Steve Herman, the VOA White House bureau chief who reported on Pence's disregard for masks. As David Folkenflik of NPR [reported](#) last week, Pack ordered two political operatives he installed as his aides to conduct an investigation of Herman's journalism. The 30-page report they delivered to VOA's acting director last month recommended that the veteran reporter be banned from covering presidential politics because of an alleged "conflict of interest," based on his tweets and social media "likes."

No action has been taken against Herman as of yet, and Pack's purges have triggered a bipartisan congressional backlash — particularly after he ignored a subpoena to appear at a House hearing. But given three more months, he could eviscerate what have been some of the most professional and effective organs of U.S. soft power.

And if Trump is reelected? Expect the Voice of America to become just another channel for authoritarian propaganda.

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Bay Fang / RFA
Date: Friday, July 10, 2020 4:33:00 PM

Hi, Hannah.

Bay Fang was fired by Parameswaran Ponnudurai, RFA's Acting President, who had been Vice President of Programming at RFA since 2014.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

=====

Pack also dismissed Bay Fang, the former Radio Free Asia chief whom Pack had demoted in June.

<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2020/07/voa-journalists-visa-renewal.html>

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Bedford "grilled" Pack
Date: Thursday, September 3, 2020 11:53:00 AM

FYSA:

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/michael-pack-can-address-voice-of-america-espionage-concerns-without-mass-firings>

Do some foreign intelligence services like to use journalism as a cover profession for their officers and agents? Yes. Does that threat deserve attention? Yes. Is this a legitimate excuse for the current visa shutdown at *Voice of America*? No.

I note this in light of Michael Pack's interview last week with *The Federalist's* Christopher Bedford. In that interview, Bedford [grilled](#) the head of the U.S. Agency for Global Media on his plan to reshape government-funded news agencies such as Voice of America.

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 4:40:22 PM

Jonathan, on a different matter. Is (b) (6) still working for VOA on a work visa? Did he previously work for Russian RT as its correspondent? It seems so by looking at the RT site.

Best,

(b) (6)

From: [Kellie Boyle](#)
To: [Michael Pack](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Bullet point chart of six memos
Date: Monday, January 4, 2021 10:36:55 AM
Attachments: [Revised End of Year Chart.docx](#)

Except this only contains four. I'll add the consolidation memo – but I don't know what the sixth memo is. Is there one on technology? Please edit this for accuracy and brevity. I'll have OPA create a much nicer looking chart. Then I'll get this out to conservative groups ASAP.

Thank you,
Kellie

Kellie M. Boyle
Communications and Media Consultant
US Agency for Global Media

(b) (6) (cell)

(b) (6) (office)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Call from a member of the public - requesting a return call
Date: Friday, July 10, 2020 2:59:17 PM

Hello Jonathan, the gentleman below, (b) (6), would like to speak with a USAGM rep. I told him I'd pass his request to USAGM managers.
thanks (b) (4)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 2:47 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Re: CEO's contact info

Yes we pls.
Thx (b) (4)

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 2:46:59 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: CEO's contact info

Hi (b) (6), I think this might be one from Jonathan.

(b) (6) just called. He'd like to talk with someone to express his concern about Mr. Pack's decision re: visas.

I believe he said he's former military and has some congressional connections in his family.

I offered our pubaff mailbox as a way to submit his comments/concerns but he said he'd prefer to talk with someone. Oh, and he promised to be polite.

He can be reached at (b) (6). His email is (b) (6)

Should I forward this to Johnathan?

thx, (b) (4)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 9:51 AM

To: (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: CEO's contact info

We can go over these later. Heading in the office now.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 9:34:17 AM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Diane Cullo (b) (6)
Subject: RE: CEO's contact info

Good morning, (b) (6).

I trust your judgement. If the inquiry is substantive, please feel to provide my email address.
Otherwise, offer (b) (6)

Thanks!

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 6:11 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6) >
Cc: Diane Cullo (b) (6)
Subject: RE: CEO's contact info

External requests.

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 5:28 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Diane Cullo (b) (6)
Subject: RE: CEO's contact info

Are they mainly internal or external requests?

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 4:44 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Cc: Diane Cullo (b) (6)
Subject: CEO's contact info

Hi Jonathan,

We have some requests in for the CEO's email address.

We typically send those requests to the front office for triage. OK to give your email address? Or Diane's?

-- Thx

(b) (6)

From: [Kellie Boyle](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Can we chat briefly today?
Date: Thursday, December 10, 2020 1:27:22 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)

Hi Jonathan,

I wasn't permitted to come in today, but I really would like to discuss both the potential infographic of your memos (attached) and the pitch to (b) (6). (I'm thinking that the version I sent you yesterday probably needed to be toned down a bit and not as obviously partisan, so below is a revision.) I'm available all afternoon.

(b) (5)



Thanks so much,

Kellie

Kellie M. Boyle
Partner

Book me for a call or meeting [here](#).



[Boyle Public Affairs](#)

703 898 6554

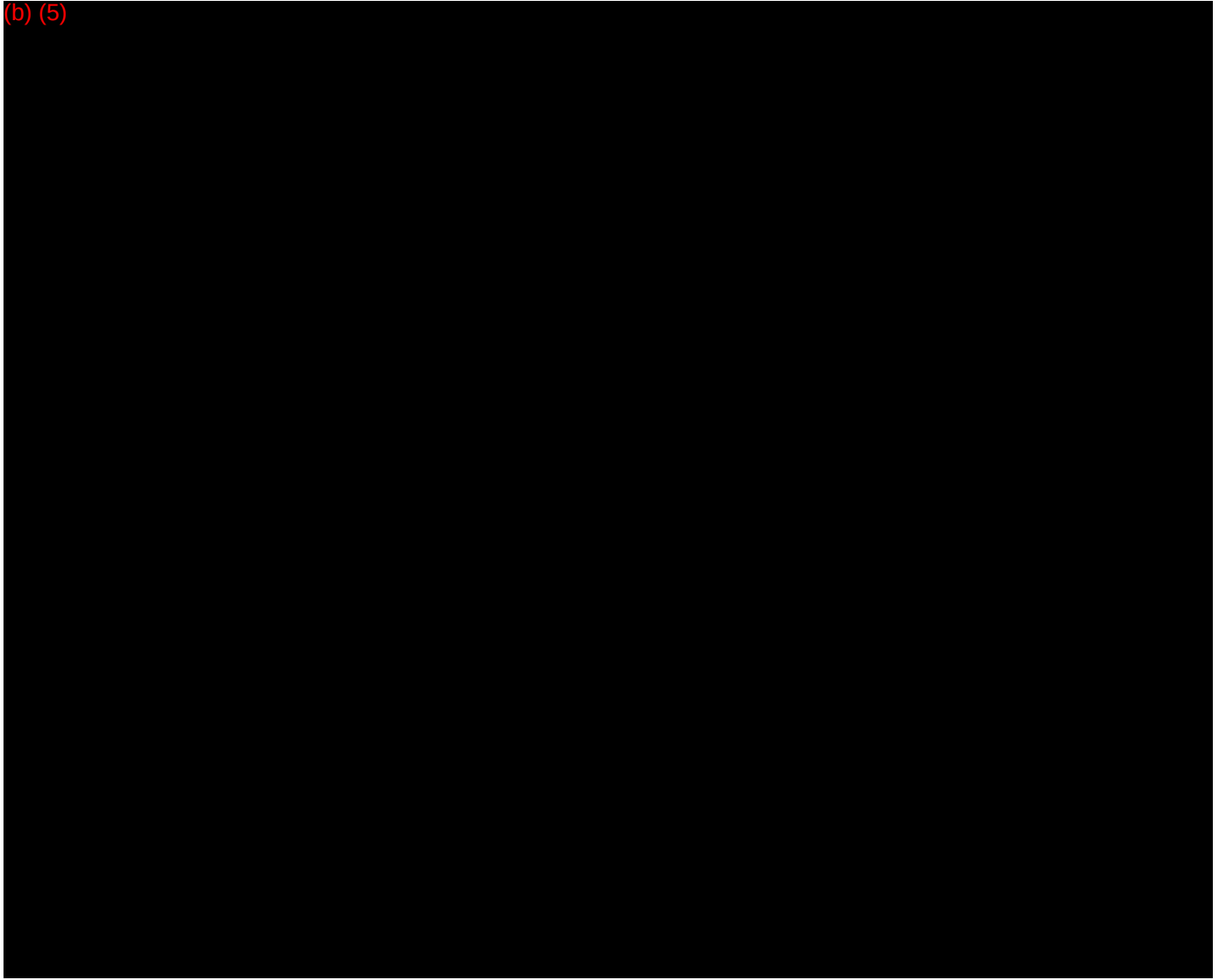
[Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#)

From: [Kellie Boyle](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Can you please review this pitch?
Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 10:31:28 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Hi Jonathan,

Here's what I've developed for (b) (6) . Do you mind briefly checking it for accuracy and giving me your thoughts? I'm actually going to go through a closer friend of (b) s who has provided (b) with some tips before.

(b) (5)



Thanks a lot,

Kellie

Kellie M. Boyle
Partner

Book me for a call or meeting [here](#).



Boyle Public Affairs

703 898 6554

[Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#)

From: [Thad Strom](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: CEO doc
Date: Thursday, October 8, 2020 5:10:37 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#),
[Draft_CEO_responsibilities.docx](#)

Draft and pre-decisional

JB, work your magic. Thanks,

Thad Strom
Senior Advisor
U.S. Agency for Global Media
w) (b) (6)
c) (b) (6)



From: [Frank Wuco](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: CEO memo - freeze on new spending - draft_fw
Date: Sunday, December 6, 2020 11:36:05 AM
Attachments: [CEO memo - freeze on new spending - draft_fw.docx](#)

JB,

Apologies. This one got by me. Please see recommendations. This this one probably needs some attention.

Best,

Frank

From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: CEO memo - J-1 visas and the hiring of foreign nationals - draft (002)
Date: Monday, January 4, 2021 3:51:03 PM
Attachments: [CEO memo - J-1 visas and the hiring of foreign nationals - draft \(002\).docx](#)

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PRE-DECISIONAL/DELIBERATIVE

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [CEO2016](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#); [Diane Cullo](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Thad Strom](#); (b) (6); [Sam Dewey](#); [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: CEO Pack issues statement on USAGM personnel and security policies
Date: Thursday, September 3, 2020 4:25:00 PM

<https://www.usagm.gov/2020/09/03/ceo-pack-issues-statement-on-usagm-personnel-and-security-policies/>

CEO Pack issues statement on USAGM personnel and security policies

September 3, 2020

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) CEO Michael Pack issued the following statement on agency personnel and security policies.

“I initiated an across-the-board contract freeze when I started in June. That type of action is regularly taken by new leadership at an organization, whether it’s in the public or the private sector, to ensure that resources are being optimally used. I then discovered that, in violation of security protocols and HR personnel practices, J-1 visas applications and renewals were being approved with little, if any, discernment. Since then, I have been working to address the situation through the creation of a review process that will both support USAGM’s mission and safeguard the security of the agency, its employees, and U.S. national security.

Alas, the issue of J-1 visas is additionally wrapped up in the severe security violations that were left unaddressed for 10 years – issues revealed in multiple U.S. Office of Personnel Management and Office of the Director of National Intelligence [reports](#) that had been buried and largely disregarded by previous agency leadership. I have been on the job for less than three months. USAGM faces a decade-worth of gross managerial incompetence that imperiled the organization’s viability and the safety of our country. And while I inherited the mess, I’m committed to cleaning it up so that USAGM, once again, serves the American people, fully focusing on our mission and on clearing the detritus of past dysfunctional leadership.”

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Subject: CEO Pack releases OPM report detailing long-standing USAGM security failures
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 2:21:00 PM
Attachments: [OPM-SuitEA-July-2020.pdf](#)
[image003.png](#)

<https://www.usagm.gov/2020/08/04/ceo-pack-releases-opm-report-detailing-long-standing-usagm-security-failures/>



[CEO Pack releases OPM report detailing long-standing USAGM security failures](#)

August 4, 2020

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) CEO Michael Pack has released a [report](#) that reveals severe and systemic security failures at the agency, many of which have persisted for years. This latest report was produced by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Suitability Executive Agent Programs, which conducts program reviews of Executive Branch agencies' personnel suitability and vetting programs.

To: (b) (6)
Subject: CEO Pack releases OPM report detailing long-standing USAGM security failures
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 2:21:02 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[OPM-SuitEA-July-2020.pdf](#)

<https://www.usagm.gov/2020/08/04/ceo-pack-releases-opm-report-detailing-long-standing-usagm-security-failures/>

CEO Pack releases OPM report detailing long-standing USAGM security failures

August 4, 2020

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) CEO Michael Pack has released a [report](#) that reveals severe and systemic security failures at the agency, many of which have persisted for years. This latest report was produced by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Suitability Executive Agent Programs, which conducts program reviews of Executive Branch agencies' personnel suitability and vetting programs.

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Thad Strom](#); [John Jagers](#)
Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Friday, December 11, 2020 10:50:00 AM
Attachments: [CEO memo - security issues - draft.docx](#)
[CEO memo - consolidation - draft.docx](#)
[CEO memo - journalistic independence - draft.docx](#)
[CEO memo - J-1 visas and the hiring of foreign nationals - draft.docx](#)
[CEO memo - spending review - draft.docx](#)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-

Thad and John,

Please find draft CEO memos attached. Note that they are being reviewed by Sam and Mora.

V/R,

Jonathan

To: [CEO2016](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020 5:50:14 PM
Attachments: [CEO memo - freeze on new spending - draft.docx](#)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Sam Dewey](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Thursday, December 3, 2020 11:27:00 AM
Attachments: [CEO memo - freeze on new spending - draft.docx](#)
[CEO memo - J-1 visas and the hiring of foreign nationals - draft.docx](#)
[CEO memo - journalistic independence - draft.docx](#)
[CEO memo - security issues - draft.docx](#)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-

Sam and Mora,

Per Michael's request, please review the attached draft CEO memos. Michael hopes to have them published in some form on USAGM.gov in the near future. Kindly coordinate to determine the appropriate division of labor.

Thank you.

V/R,
Jonathan

To: [Thad Strom](#)
Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020 2:26:21 PM
Attachments: [CEO memo - freeze on new spending - draft.docx](#)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-
-

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [CEO2016](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020 5:52:00 PM
Attachments: (b) (5)



PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-

Michael,

I haven't yet received feedback from either Frank or John. But per your request, I'm passing along the initial drafts of the four memos.

V/R,
Jonathan

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Thad Strom](#)
Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020 2:28:00 PM
Attachments: (b) (5)

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the content of the email attachments.

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

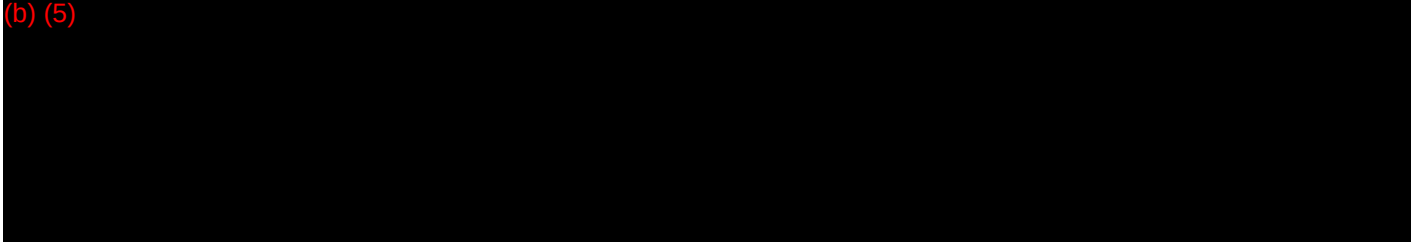
-
-

To: [Frank Wuco](#); [John Jagers](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Monday, November 30, 2020 6:14:53 PM
Attachments: (b) (5)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-
Frank and John,

(b) (5)



Thank you so much.

V/R,
Jonathan

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Thad Strom](#)
Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020 2:28:00 PM
Attachments: (b) (5)



PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

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-

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020 11:14:00 AM
Attachments: (b) (5)



PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Frank Wuco](#); [John Jagers](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Monday, November 30, 2020 6:17:00 PM
Attachments: (b) (5)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-
Frank and John,

(b) (5)

Thank you so much.

V/R,
Jonathan

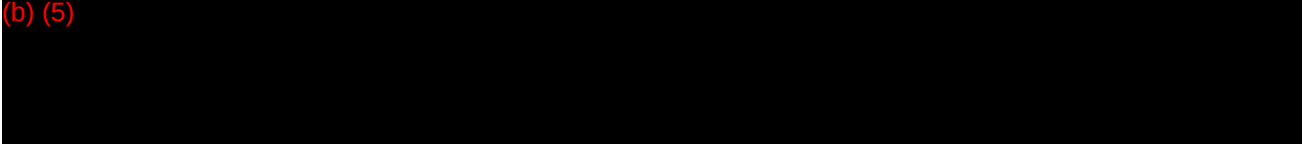
From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [CEO2016](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#); [Kellie Boyle](#); [John Jagers](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#); [Sam Dewey](#)
Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Monday, January 4, 2021 4:32:00 PM
Attachments: (b) (5)



PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-
Michael,

(b) (5)



V/R,
Jonathan

To: [Sam Dewey](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Thursday, December 3, 2020 11:14:33 AM
Attachments: (b) (5)

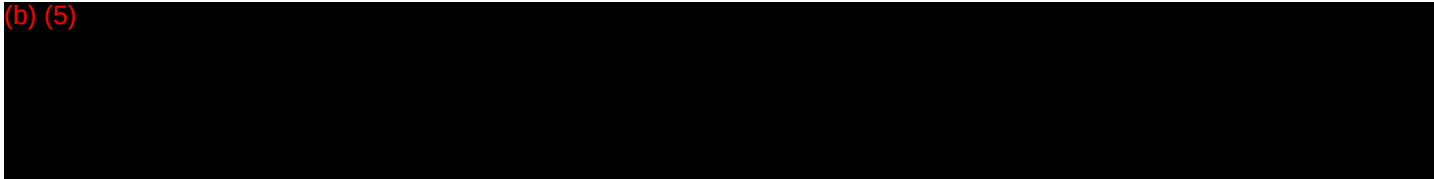


PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

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Sam and Mora,

(b) (5)



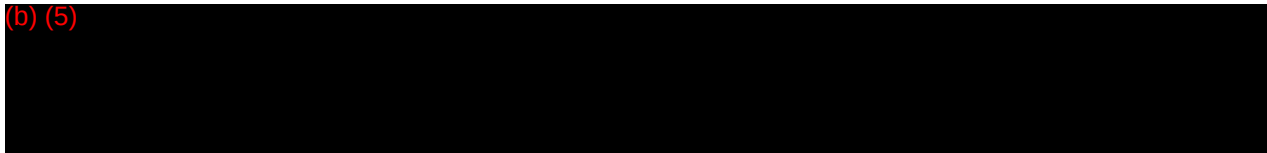
Thank you.

V/R,
Jonathan

To: [CEO2016](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#); [Kellie Boyle](#); [John Jagers](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#); [Sam Dewey](#)
Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Monday, January 4, 2021 4:30:37 PM
Attachments: (b) (5) 

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-
Michael,

(b) (5) 

V/R,
Jonathan

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Sam Dewey](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Cc: [CEO2016](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); [Kellie Boyle](#)
Subject: CEO: OIG-OTF referral (draft)
Date: Friday, January 8, 2021 5:44:00 PM
Attachments: (b) (5)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-
Sam and Mora,

(b) (5)

V/R,
Jonathan

To: [Sam Dewey](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Cc: [CEO2016](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); [Kellie Boyle](#)
Subject: CEO: OIG-OTF referral (draft)
Date: Friday, January 8, 2021 5:42:18 PM
Attachments: (b) (5)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Thad Strom](#); [Diane Cullo](#)
Subject: COI Directive v.3
Date: Friday, October 2, 2020 5:20:01 PM
Attachments: (b) (5)

Please let me know if you have any edits ASAP.

Best,

Sam

From: (b) (6)
To: [USAGM Media Clips](#)
Subject: Correction - Re: Articles FYI
Date: Monday, September 28, 2020 9:53:30 AM

Apologies all:

The article below was published in 2019 not 2020.

[Aibek Kulchumanov Radio Free EuropeRadio Liberty](#)

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre
September 28, 2020 2019

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2020 9:23 AM
To: USAGM Media Clips (b) (6)
Subject: Articles FYI

[US cuts \\$20m in funding for group helping pro-democracy efforts in Iran](#)

Open Technology Fund supports activists operating in Iran, Belarus and Hong Kong, helping them bypass internet censorship and state surveillance

Middle East Eye
September 25, 2020
MEE staff

[Trump led Admin Stops Aid For Pro-democracy Groups In Belarus, Hong Kong And Iran](#)

Finance Rewind
September 27, 2020
Suhani Chaudhary

[The Inside Story of How Signal Became the Private Messaging App for an Age of Fear and Distrust](#)

TIME
September 25, 2020
Billy Perrigo

[Washington finally admits it has been interfering in Hong Kong](#)

Members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee have blasted Michael Pack, the new czar of the US government's global media services, for stymieing US influence operations in the city

South China Morning Post

September 25, 2020

Alex Lo

[Trump Administration Proposes New Rule to Severely Restrict Student Visas](#)

The Slate

September 25, 2020

Whitney Tesi

[Aibek Kulchumanov Radio Free EuropeRadio Liberty](#)

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre

September 28, 2020

[Public Diplomacy and the New "Old" War: Countering State-Sponsored Disinformation \(2020\)](#)

US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy

ACPD SPECIAL REPORT

September 25, 2020

[Mike Pompeo's South America Trip Demonstrates Need for Sustained Commitment](#)

It is time for Washington to make clear that partnership with the United States offers more opportunity and promise than working with China.

The National Interest

September 26, 2020

James Jay Carafano Ana Quintana

To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
Subject: Coverage - J-1 - draft
Date: Sunday, July 12, 2020 2:37:56 PM
Attachments: (b) (5)

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
Subject: Coverage - J-1 - draft
Date: Sunday, July 12, 2020 2:38:00 PM
Attachments: (b) (5) [REDACTED]

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6); [David Folkenflik](#)
Subject: Coverage of USAGM
Date: Thursday, September 3, 2020 11:43:00 AM

Ms. Kopp and Mr. Folkenflik:

The following is off the record, except where otherwise specifically stated, with the intent to settle this matter.

USAGM has a number of concerns regarding two of NPR's recent reports. These concerns require retraction of much of the reports. They are of and concerning Michael Pack and Sam Dewey; are false as to material fact as to both; in no way constitute fair comment; tend to bring Mr. Pack and Mr. Dewey into hatred, ridicule, and contempt as to their professional conduct; and appear to be made with actual malice.

Voice of America Journalists: New CEO Endangers Reporters, Harms U.S. Aims (August 31, 2020)

- NPR wrote, "During the half-hour conversation, [Pack joked with The Federalist's host, senior editor Chris Bedford](#), about deporting his own employees and forcing them to adopt unsafe workplace practices that could expose them to COVID-19. Pack said the agency was ripe for espionage and possibly rife with spies." Mr. Pack did not "joke" about any of these issues. Far from it, his responses to Mr. Bedford's questions about complex and sensitive matters were reasonable, forthright, and evenhanded. NPR distorted and decontextualized his responses.
 - First, with regard to the severe and systemic security issues facing USAGM detailed in the OPM report (which NPR failed to mention, offering no context), Mr. Pack said, "We are doing everything we can to cure this as quickly as we can, and part of that is we have J-1 visas for some foreign journalists that we are supposed to approve yearly. We have been rubberstamping them and not putting them through an approval process. But I'm legally obligated to do that. So I can't just give—even if they're lovely people—a J-1 visa without going through the process, or I'd be potentially endangering the security of America. So I am anxious to fix this as quickly as I can. I feel this was a mess dumped on me by senior management over a long period of time. I was not told about it during my long wait for confirmation or even the two months I was there by existing staff. It's a huge problem—I'm working hard to fix it."
 - Second, with regard to "espionage," NPR, once again, failed to mention the severe and systemic security issues facing USAGM detailed in the OPM report that was publically released on August 4, 2020. Mr. Pack said, "I have a responsibility to make sure that the security of these agencies is maintained. The fact is that foreign intelligence agencies from the beginning—from the creation of these agencies – have been interested in penetrating them. To be a journalist is a great cover for a spy—famous journalists like Kim Philby who worked for the BBC... It's just a great cover. And from the beginning of the Cold War, even earlier, they've been penetrated. It's a great place to put a foreign spy. I have to make sure that doesn't

happen—to stand up for the national security interests of Americans.”

- Third, with regard to COVID-19, NPR falsely attributed a comment that the podcast’s host made to Mr. Pack. The exchange follows. MP: “One of the challenges of taking over an agency at this moment in time is sorting all this out, especially during COVID. The headquarters building—the Cohen Building here in Washington, DC—is largely empty. We’re bringing people back as we move from Phase I...” CB: [INTERJECTION] “Have you considered banning masks and turning off the air conditioning? That’s my prescription for federal agencies.” MP: [SEGUE] “Yeah, well, we’ll have to look into that one. But you know it’s been hard to get to know the employees when they’re largely working from home. But there are about 4,000 over all the broadcasters, so it’s a lot of people and their backgrounds are mixed. I’ve met some really great ones and some very passionate ones. And people who still, for instance on the China example, are deeply upset about the country getting worse and worse and want to do something about it and want to get the truth to their fellow countrymen who are living under this kind of oppression. It’s a noble thing, and there are journalists who are risking their lives who are working for us. We have journalists in Hong Kong that were threatened, and they’re threatened all the time. There are a lot of journalists who are heroically motivated by a desire to get the truth to these areas, and I think they need to be celebrated. I don’t want to downplay that, and they’re heroic.”
- NPR’s disclaimer as to its CEO John Lansing’s conflict of interest is insufficient as to this particular story. Mr. Lansing is not only the former CEO of USAGM, but he was directly implicated in the security failures discussed by Mr. Pack.

Voice of America Journalists Protest Trump Appointee’s Actions (September 1, 2020)

Violations of “Legal Protections”

- NPR repeatedly alleged that Mr. Pack and Mr. Dewey appear to have violated “legal protections” without any context or analysis. These allegations are false and it is manifestly unreasonable to accuse U.S. Government officials of violations of legal protections without affording the opportunity to respond or comment.

VOA Urdu Video:

- NPR stated, “Sam Dewey declined comment.” The print version of the story stated that “[a]n agency spokesman, Jonathan Bronitsky, said USAGM would not reply to questions posed about this incident”— the so-called “incident” referring to the allegation that Mr. Dewey “has repeatedly pushed to participate in planning for election reporting and overarching news coverage.” Again this is false.
 - To be sure, USAGM declined to comment on inquires NPR sent to Mr. Bronitsky on August 31, 2020. But at no time in NPR’s August 31, 2020 inquiry did it seek comment on this “incident.” Had NPR sought comment on this specific point, USAGM would have provided a response consistent with the agency’s policy and past agency comments.
- But USAGM did provide a response to NPR’s inquiries of August 20, 2020 on the same subject. NPR made no mention of this response, which is directly on point. On August 20, 2020, Mr.

Bronitsky responded to Mr. Folkenflik's general questions "on background, attributable to a 'USAGM spokesperson'" with the following comments:

- "Re VOA Urdu: 'The VOA Urdu content transgressed not only the VOA Charter, which is public law, but also VOA's Best Practices Guide, VOA's Journalistic Code, and the agency's Standards & Principles. USAGM and VOA career officials conducted an investigation to discern who was responsible for this significant editorial review collapse to help ensure that similar breakdowns do not occur in the future. CEO Pack, who is firmly committed to carrying out long-needed reform at the agency, will continue to ensure that violations of the agency's professional journalistic principles are dealt with swiftly and fairly in order to safeguard USAGM's reputation and the integrity of its news and information programming, which reach a weekly global audience of over 350 million people.'"
- "Re conventions: 'No one in USAGM's Office of the CEO was asked to participate in the planning of the coverage of either major party convention or the general election campaign.'"
- Mr. Folkenflik did not acknowledge receipt, let alone register an issue with the attribution. In past exchanges, he has swiftly acknowledged receipt. He then sent an email titled "following up" 11 days later on August 31, 2020 that posed far more detailed questions about the VOA Urdu investigation. Those questions involved Mr. Dewey but, this time, did not reference election coverage, which became a significant focus of his reporting. Mr. Folkenflik's email opened: "Can we try this again? to be clear, i need as in all cases in quoting a spokesperson, to be able to attribute by name, regardless of whether I do so." The mean of this point is entirely unclear. Mr. Bronitsky responded, "Decline to comment— per USAGM spokesperson." Mr. Folkenflik then wrote, "Thank you, Jonathan, for your reply."
 - Mr. Folkenflik writes in his September 2, 2020 report, "An agency spokesman, Jonathan Bronitsky, said USAGM would not reply to questions posed about the Biden video and the aftermath." Since Mr. Folkenflik used Mr. Bronitsky's name, he should have used it in connection with the answers that Mr. Bronitsky provided on August 20, 2020, which directly addressed core issues of the report, among them, USAGM's mission, its relationship with VOA, and the agency's handling of election coverage.
- NPR asserted that Mr. Dewey "declined comment to NPR," but again that is not correct. Mr. Dewey was never asked to comment on the present story—USAGM was. Mr. Dewey was asked to comment in the August 20, 2020 story. He did not decline to do so, but referred the inquiry through proper channels (to which Mr. Folkenflik said "terrific thanks") leading to USAGM's (ignored) response.
 - The following statement is available on the record, attributable to Mr. Bronitsky as "a USAGM spokesperson": "The allegations that Mr. Dewey 'repeatedly pushed to be involved in planning further coverage of the political season,' 'has repeatedly pushed to participate in planning for election reporting and overarching news coverage,' and 'sought to help steer future campaign coverage' are categorically false. At no time did Mr. Dewey, or any other USAGM Front Office official, seek to be involved in planning election (or any) coverage, or to otherwise 'steer' such coverage. NPR's allegations are based entirely on anonymous sources and its report contains no evidence to back up these assertions. If NPR has evidence to support its statements, it should produce it. It is outrageous to make such a baseless and scurrilous accusation, fail to ask for comment

on the specific allegation, then claim that NPR did ask for such comment, while also ignoring a prior USAGM comment that is directly on point, denying that such conduct occurred.”

- NPR referenced a tweet by the VOA Spanish language service that you allege was biased in favor of President Trump. The following statement is available on the record, again, attributable to Mr. Bronitsky as “a USAGM spokesperson”: “This is the first that the USAGM Front Office has heard of this matter. Upon reading NPR’s article, USAGM immediately directed that VOA leadership review the matter, and if the tweet was as reported, directed that Human Resources open an investigation in coordination with USAGM.”
 - A senior VOA career official reviewed your allegations as a matter of urgency and found that NPR’s reporting was false. Specifically, the official relayed the following. As a conscious journalistic decision, as part of its convention coverage plan for both conventions, the VOA Spanish service had decided that all coverage of each political convention would be posted to a “thread” in Twitter, rather than being individually tweeted. The Republican response to the first night of the Democratic Convention was initially incorrectly sent out as a separate tweet, however. It should have been posted to the thread, as was the plan. When editors noticed the mistake, they took down the tweet and incorporated it in the thread. The senior VOA career official also stated, “[i]f NPR had asked for us to verify the allegation, we would have corrected its reporter.”

In USAGM’s view, the problems detailed herein, cumulatively, require retraction of much of the reports.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

Principal Director of Public Affairs
U.S. Agency for Global Media

To: (b) (6); [David Folkenflik](#)
Subject: Coverage of USAGM
Date: Thursday, September 3, 2020 11:40:18 AM

Ms. Kopp and Mr. Folkenflik:

The following is off the record, except where otherwise specifically stated, with the intent to settle this matter.

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[Voice of America Journalists: New CEO Endangers Reporters, Harms U.S. Aims \(August 31, 2020\)](#)

- NPR wrote, "During the half-hour conversation, [Pack joked with The Federalist's host, senior editor Chris Bedford](#), about deporting his own employees and forcing them to adopt unsafe workplace practices that could expose them to COVID-19. Pack said the agency was ripe for espionage and possibly rife with spies." Mr. Pack did not "joke" about any of these issues. Far from it, his responses to Mr. Bedford's questions about complex and sensitive matters were reasonable, forthright, and evenhanded. NPR distorted and decontextualized his responses.
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‘USAGM spokesperson’” with the following comments:

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 - The following statement is available on the record, attributable to Mr. Bronitsky as “a USAGM spokesperson”: “The allegations that Mr. Dewey ‘repeatedly pushed to be involved in planning further coverage of the political season,’ ‘has repeatedly pushed to participate in planning for election reporting and overarching news coverage,’ and ‘sought to help steer future campaign coverage’ are categorically false. At no time did Mr. Dewey, or any other USAGM Front Office official, seek to be involved in planning election (or any) coverage, or to otherwise ‘steer’ such coverage. NPR’s allegations are based entirely on anonymous sources and its report contains no evidence to back up these assertions. If NPR has evidence to support its statements, it should produce it. It is outrageous to make such a baseless and scurrilous accusation, fail to ask for comment on the specific allegation, then claim that NPR did ask for such comment, while also

ignoring a prior USAGM comment that is directly on point, denying that such conduct occurred.”

- NPR referenced a tweet by the VOA Spanish language service that you allege was biased in favor of President Trump. The following statement is available on the record, again, attributable to Mr. Bronitsky as “a USAGM spokesperson”: “This is the first that the USAGM Front Office has heard of this matter. Upon reading NPR’s article, USAGM immediately directed that VOA leadership review the matter, and if the tweet was as reported, directed that Human Resources open an investigation in coordination with USAGM.”
 - A senior VOA career official reviewed your allegations as a matter of urgency and found that NPR’s reporting was false. Specifically, the official relayed the following. As a conscious journalistic decision, as part of its convention coverage plan for both conventions, the VOA Spanish service had decided that all coverage of each political convention would be posted to a “thread” in Twitter, rather than being individually tweeted. The Republican response to the first night of the Democratic Convention was initially incorrectly sent out as a separate tweet, however. It should have been posted to the thread, as was the plan. When editors noticed the mistake, they took down the tweet and incorporated it in the thread. The senior VOA career official also stated, “[i]f NPR had asked for us to verify the allegation, we would have corrected its reporter.”

In USAGM’s view, the problems detailed herein, cumulatively, require retraction of much of the reports.

Thank you for your time. USAGM hopes to be able to work with NPR to settle this matter.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

Principal Director of Public Affairs
U.S. Agency for Global Media

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Robert Patterson](#)
Subject: CVs
Date: Friday, October 16, 2020 3:41:00 PM
Attachments: (b) (6) [CV 2020.pdf](#)
June 2020 - (b) (6) [- US Agency for Global Media - Letter of Interest.pdf](#)
May 2020 - (b) (6) [- US Agency for Global Media - Letter of Interest.pdf](#)
(b) (6) [RESUME SEPT. 2020.pdf](#)
(b) (6) [- bio 2020.pdf](#)

From: [Thad Strom](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: draft docs
Date: Friday, October 23, 2020 5:13:20 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

(b) (5)

Both docs attached. Please add line or two on Michael's if you don't feel they are already reflected.
Thanks

Thad Strom
Senior Advisor
U.S. Agency for Global Media

w) (b) (6)

c) (b) (6)

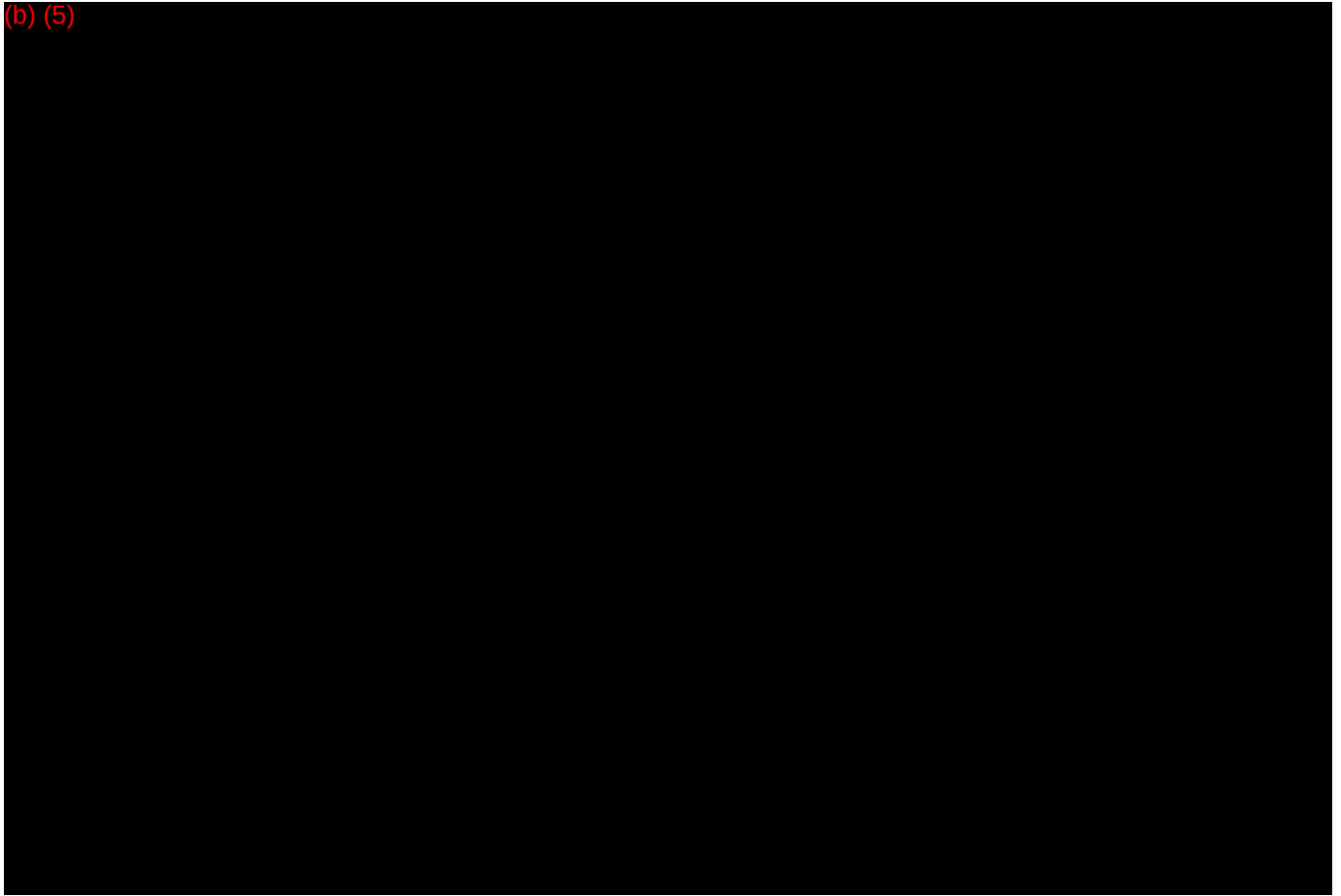


From: [Kellie Boyle](#)
To: [Michael Pack](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Draft of letter and chart for conservative groups
Date: Monday, December 28, 2020 4:06:30 PM
Attachments: [YearEndChartInfo \(002\).docx](#)

Attached is a draft of the bullet-points chart, although it needs work, both in design and in the order in which the bullet points appear. Pending your edits, I will return this to OPA for reworking. Below is a draft of the letter:

Dear (Conservative Leader),

(b) (5)



Sincerely,

Michael Pack

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Edited, cleared blog post and final report "Addressing Disinformation"
Date: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 6:28:58 PM
Attachments: [USAGM-OPR-AddressingDisinformation-08-26-2020.pdf](#)
[Revised Disinfo blog pmp.final.docx](#)

Hi Jonathan

Here is an edited, cleared version of OPR's report and blog post about disinformation that we would like to post on the site.

Approved by:

(b) (6)

Let us know what you think!

Thanks!

(b) (6)
Communications Specialist - Writer-Editor
U.S. Agency for Global Media
Washington, D.C. 20237

(b) (6)

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [CEO2016](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#); [Diane Cullo](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Thad Strom](#); (b) (6)
[Sam Dewey](#); [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: Elliott, Hill: Much ado about news
Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 5:35:00 PM



[Much ado about news](#)

BY KIM ANDREW ELLIOTT, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR — 09/02/20 03:30 PM EDT

"If I was a foreign spy, this is the agency I would target," said an unnamed official of the U.S. Agency for Global Media to a conservative website. USAGM is the parent agency of the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and other U.S. international broadcasting entities.

As others have made the case, foreign actors have sought to infiltrate and influence other countries, particularly the U.S., under the blanket of journalism. A report released by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) revealed that during a period spanning 10 years, USAGM had not fully vetted journalists and other personnel, potentially leaving America vulnerable to security threats from those with nefarious intentions.

Considering a number of VOA broadcasters are from authoritarian nations that are not necessarily allied with the U.S., it's not particularly shocking that some adversarial nations might attempt to use the cover of this outlet to gain an advantage.

In its report, OPM cited deficiencies in security investigations at USAGM involving its incoming and existing employees. USAGM publicly released OPM's report on Aug. 4, and on Aug. 12, Michael Pack, the Trump-appointed and new CEO of USAGM, placed six senior officials of his agency on administrative leave, with their security clearances revoked. Those dismissed include the chief financial officer and general counsel. This

bureaucratic purge was part of a security investigation into alleged failures on the part of previous USAGM management that, [in Pack's words](#), "pose a threat to U.S. national security."

It's enough to take one's breath away. All this talk about security clearances, access to classified documents and national security can't be helpful to the credibility of USAGM journalists, giving the impression that they are involved in top secret conferences with the Department of State, National Security Council, the CIA, the Department of Defense and other agencies, to formulate the ideal spin to the news that is distributed to gullible audiences abroad.

In an Aug. 27 podcast [interview](#) with the very conservative website The Federalist, Pack [said](#) "To be a journalist is a great cover for a spy," although he admitted there is no evidence any USAGM employee is a foreign spy. This interview prompted 14 VOA journalists to send a [letter](#) of protest to VOA acting director Elez Biberaj, in which they noted "there has not been a single demonstrable case of any individual working for VOA as the USAGM CEO puts it 'posing as a spy.'" They also protested "the firing of contract journalists, with no valid reason, by [canceling their visas](#)."

Delusions of foreign policy intrigue notwithstanding, USAGM is an organization of five news outlets. Here is how [it works](#): People in many countries need news about their countries and the rest of the world that is more comprehensive and reliable than the news they get from their own state-controlled domestic media. It is in the interest of the United States that these people have the information they need to form their own opinions. This is necessary to the formation and maintenance of democracies and to confound dictators in their intentions to commit mischief.

Such a news service in the 62 languages of the USAGM entities is not provided by private U.S. media because there is no profit potential. It is therefore necessary for the U.S. government to provide the funding. But — and this is the hard part — the government must then give these news organizations the independence to do journalism, or they will not achieve the credibility required to attract audiences. This formula has worked for BBC World Service, the most successful international broadcaster.

What sort of "threat to national security" can journalists be? The most likely plot would be that a regime plant an operative to be recruited as a journalist

at a USAGM entity to write stories favorable to that regime. He or she has to have some experience in news, even if it's for a state outlet. The new hire might be assigned to cover the U.S. soybean harvest, eventually working up to international topics, like Brexit. Only after several months of competent writing could the journalist delve into the current events of the target country.

And throughout the process, there would be an editor, whose job is to spot any bias that the operative might attempt. What if the editor is the operative? It would take years to reach that position — a lengthy process for results that would be less than a treasure trove for information warfare. But if it does happen, there is also a program review process at least once a year for each language service, in which they look for bias and violations of journalistic standards.

While foreign affairs agencies produce documents that are generally not available to the public, the USAGM entities produce news and features that are placed online for all to see. It is, after all, broadcasting. Observers, pundits, scholars, detractors and, most important, the audience can look at all this output and state any objections.

Reporters at the USAGM entities shouldn't have access to classified documents. As far as I can determine, they don't, except when they get hold of the same leaks available to private media. Access to classified material should be limited to a very small number of administrators who are involved in tasks such as placing relay facilities overseas. To enhance security, senior non-journalist personnel, along with their padlocked file cabinets, can be placed in a separate building.

Then let the USAGM newsrooms get on with the business of reporting news.

Kim Andrew Elliott is a retired Voice of America media journalist and audience research analyst.

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [CEO2016](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#); [Diane Cullo](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Thad Strom](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Sam Dewey](#); [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: Evans (Epoch Times): US Agency for Global Media Reopens Office of Internet Freedom
Date: Thursday, September 24, 2020 10:30:00 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

EPOCH TIMES

POLITICS

US Agency for Global Media Reopens Office of Internet Freedom

BY [BONNIE EVANS](#)

September 23, 2020 Updated: September 23, 2020

News Analysis

The U.S. Agency for Global Media ([USAGM](#)), which oversees U.S. government broadcasters such as Voice of America and Radio Free Asia, reopened its Office of Internet Freedom (OIF) last month.

OIF, which began operations in 2016, had been closed by leadership prior to the June 4 confirmation of current USAGM Chief Executive Michael Pack.

“There is a critical need to support technologies that allow individuals to securely access and share information online,” the agency said in an [Aug. 18 statement](#).

OIF’s mission is to support the testing, deployment, and management of technologies that circumvent internet blocking, filtering, and other censorship techniques principally used by repressive regimes, such as China and Iran, the agency said in the release.

“Unlike prior USAGM leadership, which sidelined OIF, I consider bolstering internet firewall circumvention to be a top priority,” Pack said. “Blocking access to information is a horrible thing. ... That’s why we’re funding a range

of internet firewall circumvention tools.”

With the announcement that OIF is back in business, Pack is moving to reestablish control over USAGM’s circumvention efforts, which had been challenged by a previous attempt to establish a shop called the Open Technology Fund (OTF) independent of USAGM control.

At least one issue central to the conflict within USAGM is a debate over whether to use open-source or closed-source technology. As Pack has sought to regain control, the USAGM and a key staff member have come under attack.

Circumventing Censorship

Mechanisms that censor the internet are principally used in authoritarian countries such as China and Iran. Circumventing those mechanisms is a common goal of government agencies and nonprofit organizations that attempt to empower citizens in repressive regimes by opening up access to the internet, but the means for doing so are often hotly debated.

One major point of contention is the use of open-source versus closed-source software (often called “proprietary”).

OIF will begin its new existence by funding one of each type. Open-source Psiphon and Cisco’s closed-source proprietary ACI are the first beneficiaries of the revived OIF.

In exclusive remarks to The Epoch Times, Katrina Lantos Swett, a noted human rights expert and president of the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice, said that “the Lantos Foundation advocates for all classes of internet freedom tools to be funded, including circumvention tools.

“Freegate and Ultrasurf are both large-scale circumvention tools that have

received U.S. government funds in the past, and we would be happy to see future awards go to field-tested technologies like these that have undergone rigorous security vetting,” she said.

“We also believe all internet freedom technologies that receive funding should be thoroughly evaluated on an ongoing basis, to ensure that funds are being spent on the most effective tools available,” Lantos Swett said.

USAGM also includes under its funding and supervisory umbrella an entity called the Open Technology Fund (OTF). It, like OIF, has been in the business of supporting internet firewall circumnavigation tools.

OTF, however, has been firmly in the camp of using open-source solutions exclusively since its inception as a program within Radio Free Asia (RFA).

Going Rogue

OTF’s adamant exclusion of any internet freedom tools that are closed-source may have been one of the reasons that leadership of the program seemed to go rogue last year.

In September 2019, U.S. records show that Libby Liu, at that time the head of RFA and the OTF program, incorporated Open Technology Fund as a domestic nonprofit corporation under her own name.

Liu is listed as “incorporator” under the “beneficial owners” listing of the corporation’s registration file.

Senior officials at USAGM maintain that Liu had no authorization from either the agency or from any government organization to spin OTF off into its own entity. OTF receives its entire budget from USAGM.

In addition, OTF vacated its affordable office space at USAGM headquarters and moved to an expensive office district in downtown Washington on a taxpayer-funded lease, according to senior officials at USAGM.

In addition, according to officials, OTF didn't leave a forwarding address. Officials at the USAGM say they had to search for the new offices themselves.

When Pack took office just over nine months later, he fired the heads of the USAGM networks and the OTF, including Liu and some board members.

Now, a lawsuit seeks to invalidate those firings, and to unfreeze grant money, which dismissed officials claim is being withheld.

Senior officials at USAGM dispute the lawsuit's claims that Pack didn't have the authority to fire network directors and Liu at OTF. In addition, senior USAGM officials say that money isn't being withheld from the OTF, stating that it is being paid on a revised schedule.

Open-Source Versus Closed-Source Software

Some experts differ with OTF's dogmatic rejection of closed-source circumvention technologies.

CoreDNA, a Australian company that provides a unified cloud platform for digital businesses, according to its website, states that "open source software is available for the general public to use and modify from its original design free of charge."

"What it means is that a piece of software can evolve and be iterated upon by other developers anywhere in the world."

Therefore, CoreDNA's blog on the subject continues, open-source software "should also come with a warning label."

"Whilst an open and peer-to-peer-oriented web is to be applauded philosophically, it can leave us vulnerable to rogue developers who choose to

break things for their own benefit. Hence, the need for a warning label.”

Closed-source software doesn’t need that warning label.

The source code of closed-source software “is not shared with the public for anyone to look at or change,” the company states.

‘Next Frontier of Human Rights’

“Internet freedom is the next frontier of human rights,” Lantos Swett also told The Epoch Times. She’s also a former chair and vice-chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, and teaches human rights and American foreign policy at Tufts University.

She says there are “a few clear goals” that the foundation she leads strives to achieve.

“Open the internet to those in closed societies. Provide funding and tools to empower people to see beyond the censored views of their own totalitarian governments. Give them the freedom to learn, to organize, and to thrive the same way we do in open societies.”

Unlike OTF and its supporters, however, Lantos Swett said that “we are proponents of internet freedom in all its forms.”

“This encompasses both open and closed source technologies.”

The key is to have “a large and flexible toolbox of technologies and approaches” that not only protect a user’s privacy, including those under repressive surveillance, but that also, and critically, “currently circumvent firewalls for millions of users in closed societies.”

It’s funding for those circumvention tools that’s concerned Lantos Swett for years.

“Circumvention tools offer one of the most effective ways to bring down, for example, the Great Firewall of China,” she said.

“At the very least,” Lantos Swett said, those tools can “punch large holes” into China’s infamous digital barricade.

Despite their effectiveness, however, recent years have seen “a trend of reduced funding,” and in some cases a “complete lack of funding” for large-scale circumvention tools.

“We don’t view funding for internet freedom as an either-or scenario, where we have to fund only open-source or exclusively circumvention tools. But we feel strongly that the latter should receive adequate funding to ensure that there is enough capacity to meet the demand coming from closed societies.”

“We also support the continuing development of new technologies,” she said.

Lantos Swett also weighed in on the controversy between USAGM and its erstwhile spinoff, the OTF.

In The Hill in May, Lantos Swett wrote, “It is folly to think that the 2019 re-establishment of OTF as an independent nonprofit and the sole grantee of the USAGM’s internet freedom funds will lead to any meaningful change.”

“We have been advocating since 2009 to re-direct a portion of the U.S. government’s internet freedom funds” to what is now the USAGM.

Since then, despite potential breakthroughs, “we have equally often been disappointed when we have seen obfuscation, misdirection, and at times even blatant discrimination vis-à-vis decisions about funding.”

Despite “ongoing dialogue” with the former leadership of both USAGM and the OTF that Liu headed, “we have generally witnessed a lack of follow-through in support for some of the most effective circumvention tools

currently available.”

“When OTF was re-established as a nonprofit in late 2019 under the same leadership, we had little confidence that we would see meaningful change and this fear was borne out.”

Lantos Swett is “cautiously optimistic”, however, that the changes at USAGM may result in “increased funding for circumvention tools, alongside continued funding for other types of internet freedom tools.”

“We welcome a move in this direction, but given what we have witnessed in the past, we’re going to reserve our judgment until we actually see what action the leadership at USAGM takes.”

“Again, our goal is to open up the internet in closed societies. We look forward to working with anyone who shares this goal, and we’re supportive of pursuing the full range of tools and approaches that hold promise for reaching it,” she said.

Attacks on USAGM

Since the firings, USAGM and one member of Pack’s staff, in particular, have come under attack on social media and in the press.

Mora Namdar, vice-president of legal compliance and risk at USAGM, has been a key focus of disparagement on Twitter.

One Twitter user, Nima Fatemi, [wrote](#):

“This is an absurd intimidation tactic being employed by Michael Pack and his disgrace of ‘acting VP for legal matters’; A new low standard for the US government. Big congrats to Mora Namdar for becoming a sock puppet for the fascists. #saveinternetfreedom”

The “tactic” to which Fatemi refers is likely the unscheduled visit Namdar

made to OTF's new office, once its location had been identified.

Fatemi is described as an "independent security researcher, focused on encryption, privacy and censorship circumvention technologies," on the website Dxfest.com.

Pack came to Namdar's defense in a press release and on Twitter.

"The attempts of those with money and power to disparage her are transparent, weak, and without merit. I am lucky to have Ms. Namdar on my team," Pack wrote.

"The campaign being waged by individuals who seem more concerned about covering up corruption and past failures than working on behalf of the American people should outrage every American citizen. In particular, the personal and false attacks launched against Mora Namdar and other members of my staff working to advance freedom and human rights are totally without merit," he wrote on Twitter on Aug. 21.

"One can only surmise that OTF's desire to foment scandal is to distract from its numerous serious lapses and unwillingness to be transparent about its activities."

Namdar is a lawyer, a daughter of immigrants who fled Iran after the 1979 revolution, and a recognized human rights activist.

Namdar told The Epoch Times that "all of the people who have attacked me have never met me."

"I'm an ardent supporter of rooting out corruption."

Namdar has been heartened, though, by some of the responses to social media slurs directed at her.

“On Twitter, people I don’t know have jumped on the bandwagon to defend me.”

Pack, a Trump appointee whose nomination languished in the Senate for more than two years, had already withstood one spate of fierce media criticism earlier in the summer from Democrats and some never-Trump Republicans as a tool-in-waiting of the president who would pursue a policy of selective speech in favor of the administration.

The predictions of interference from the White House into the journalistic process at networks such as Voice of America to date haven’t been realized.

In the meantime, on July 1, the Open Technology Fund posted a notice on its website titled “Pause in September Round.” The notice went on to say:

“Due to the current lack of clarity around the availability and timeline of the remainder of our FY2020 funds, we have decided to postpone the opening of the upcoming rounds of the Internet Freedom Fund and the Core Infrastructure Fund and will not accept submissions.”

It goes on to tell readers, “We are always available for your questions – feel free to contact team members directly or get in touch via hello@opentech.fund.”

However, no one replied to a request for comment sent to that email address. In addition, an email sent to the email address for press inquiries that is listed on OTF’s website bounced back. No phone number for the organization is listed on the website. The LinkedIn listings for Liu and Laura Cunningham, the principal director of OTF under Liu, don’t include a messaging function.

From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: [Thad Strom](#); [Diane Cullo](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: [Frank Wuco](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Subject: Firewall W. OLC v.9
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2020 2:01:05 PM
Attachments: (b) (5)

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ATTORNEY WORK PRODUCT
ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATION
PRE-DECISIONAL/DELIBERATIVE

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Follow up - Fw: WashPost question for you
Date: Friday, July 31, 2020 2:36:50 PM

Forwarding this follow up for your awareness.

thx, (b) (6)

From: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2020 2:25 PM
To: (b) (6) USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6)
Cc: Public Relations (b) (6)
Subject: Re: WashPost question for you

Thanks, (b) (6), but since you now routinely refer my queries to USAGM, I'm not sure it serves my interests or yours to contact you in the future. So I'll cut out the middle man and go directly to USAGM, although I have found USAGM to be largely unhelpful over the past several months.

Thank you for your response.

My best to you...Paul

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2020 2:03 PM
To: Farhi, Paul (b) (6); USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6) (b) (6)
Cc: Public Relations (b) (6)
Subject: RE: WashPost question for you

Hi Paul,

Very good to hear from you, as always.

On the J-1 visa matter, we are referring all questions to the USAGM Public Affairs team—which is copied here.

Never hesitate to contact me and VOA Public Relations on any matters involving Voice of America. It is always a good practice to include the PR e-mail address on queries since there are occasions each of us are away from e-mail.

Best,

(b)
(6)

(b) (6)

Deputy Director (Outreach and Engagement)

VOA Public Relations

330 Independence Ave., SW

Washington, DC 20237

Direct: (b) (6)

Main: (b) (6)

Cell: (b) (6)

(b) (6)

www.insidevoa.com [insidevoa.com]

@insidevoa

From: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)

Sent: Friday, July 31, 2020 1:44 PM

To: (b) (6)

Subject: Re: WashPost question for you

Hi again, (b) (6) ...I'd like to get VOA's comment for a story I'm writing today about the visa-renewal (or non-renewal) issue. I've spoken to several staffers who are about to disappear from your ranks because they can't get their visas renewed by USAGM.

Can you tell me how many VOA staffers are working on J1 visas right now?

Also, what will you do once these people are required to leave? Can you hire domestic journalists to their jobs?

Thanks...Paul

Paul Farhi

Washington Post

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 8:23 PM

To: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)

Cc: Public Relations (b) (6)

Subject: Re: WashPost question for you

CAUTION: EXTERNAL SENDER

Hi Paul,

I will look into this and see if I can get you an answer. Can you tell me what your deadline is on this?

Best,

(b)
(6)

Sent from my iPhone

> On Jul 8, 2020, at 7:54 PM, Farhi, Paul (b) (6) wrote:

>

> Hello, (b) (6) ... I'm hearing that there have been some personnel cuts at VOA's language services due to the expiration of various visas and a decision not to extend them by USAGM. Can you tell me anything about this?

>

> Thanks for your help...Paul

>

> Paul Farhi

> Washington Post

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Follow-up #2 Media Inquiry: VOA news story on USAGM personnel moves
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 12:27:13 PM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 12:19 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Cc: VOA Newsroom Duty Editors (b) (6)
Subject: RE: VOA news story on USAGM personnel moves

Good afternoon – here are the questions for our news story about the recent personnel moves.

If you can respond to any of these as soon as possible that would be much appreciated as we are aiming to publish a story soon.

-- Please confirm that the following career USAGM officials have been removed from their positions: Grant Turner, David Kligerman, Oahn Tran, Shawn Powers, Matt Walsh, Marie Lennon. Are there others?

-- What is their status now?

-- Do you intend to fire them?

-- Please state in each instance why you are taking this action against these individuals?

-- The officials were told the decision relates to security lapses while they were in senior positions.

Presumably, this relates to the recent OPM report. Please confirm.

-- The current COO, Andre Mendes, also was in USAGM senior management during the period covered by the OPM report. Why is he excepted from the group being removed?

-- Please comment on Turner's claims that he was removed for pointing out "gross mismanagement" by the new USAGM leadership.

-- Please comment on Kligerman's claims that your actions are in retaliation for speaking "truth to power" simply by providing legal advice as his job requires.

-- Please comment on the firewall and any plans USAGM has to change it or reinterpret it. Please comment on assertions that the following actions violate the firewall:

1. Removal of VOA's Steve Stringer as standards officer.
2. J-1 visa delays, which interfere with editorial processes
3. USAGM rather than VOA investigating the Urdu-Biden situation
4. Hold on RFA funds so threatening missed payroll at RFA

-- Please comment on John Lansing's assertion that 1) you have exaggerated the security/vetting problems outlined in the OPM report and 2) the issue is a "smokescreen"

-- Numerous critics have alleged that Mr. Pack wants to turn USAGM into a "propaganda" outlet for the Trump administration. Please rebut and/or comment.

-- Congressman Engel said he will be holding hearings on this matter. Will Mr. Pack participate?

-- Please confirm that this is an accurate, officials USAGM statement from Michael Pack: "We took action today to restore integrity to and respect for the rule of law in our work at USAGM. We will take additional steps to help return this agency to its glory days."

-- Please elaborate on the meaning of this statement with respect to the rule of law. What laws were

being broken?

-- Please comment on the Amanda Bennett statement comparing what is happening at USAGM to McCarthyism. (see: <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/08/12/trump-purge-us-agency-global-media-394403>)

-- Please comment on the following statement from Bennett: "What is happening at USAGM is a microcosm of what's happening across the US Government -- driving out honest, skilled, long serving public servants on trumped up charges and replacing them with people of no qualifications whose only attribute is loyalty."

-- Please confirm that, as reported in the NY Post, VOA's Tabinda Naeem has been suspended and that four Urdu Service contactors are being terminated in connection with the Joe Biden Video. (see: <https://nypost.com/2020/08/12/voa-leaders-sidelined-over-pro-biden-video-and-foreign-hiring/>)

-- If you choose not to respond to our questions, please explain why.

Thanks again,

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 10:36 AM

To: Public Affairs (b) (6)

Cc: VOA Newsroom Duty Editors (b) (6)

Subject: RE: VOA news story on USAGM personnel moves

Hi -- one quick followup question: can USAGM confirm that the statement given to Politico still stands?

"We took action today to restore integrity to and respect for the rule of law in our work at USAGM. We will take additional steps to help return this agency to its glory days."

<https://www.politico.com/news/2020/08/12/trump-purge-us-agency-global-media-394403>

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 9:37 AM

To: Public Affairs (b) (6)

Cc: VOA Newsroom Duty Editors (b) (6)

Subject: VOA news story on USAGM personnel moves

Good morning.

VOA is preparing a news story on USAGM's personnel moves announced yesterday.

We are letting you know now that we will be reaching out for USAGM comment in the coming hours so we can include comments from the CEO's office. If there's anyone in particular we should direct our questions to please let us know.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

News Center Assignment Editor

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Follow-up Inquiry: CPJ Journalist/Researcher - Visas
Date: Monday, July 13, 2020 1:33:13 PM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 1:19:09 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: request for comment

Hello,

I'm a researcher at the Committee to Protect Journalists. I have several questions about the USAGM's recent announcement that it will suspend processing of J-1 visas for VOA employees.

- Are you concerned that this will put VOA employees in danger if they are compelled to return to their home countries because their visa did not renew?
- Are there plans to restart the J-1 visa renewal process?
- How will this affect other USAGM affiliated outlets including Radio Free Asia and RFE/RL?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

(b) (6)

Committee to Protect Journalists

(b) (6)

www.cpj.org

Are you a journalist covering protests in the United States? Please see CPJ's [Protest Safety Guide](#).

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (4)
Subject: Follow-up Inquiry: CPJ Journalist/Researcher - Visas
Date: Monday, July 13, 2020 1:33:13 PM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 1:19:09 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: request for comment

Hello,

I'm a researcher at the Committee to Protect Journalists. I have several questions about the USAGM's recent announcement that it will suspend processing of J-1 visas for VOA employees.

- Are you concerned that this will put VOA employees in danger if they are compelled to return to their home countries because their visa did not renew?
- Are there plans to restart the J-1 visa renewal process?
- How will this affect other USAGM affiliated outlets including Radio Free Asia and RFE/RL?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best

(b) (6)

Committee to Protect Journalists

(b) (6)

www.cpj.org

Are you a journalist covering protests in the United States? Please see CPJ's [Protest Safety Guide](#).

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Follow-up Media Inquiry from VOA News: J-1 visas VOA - please provide comment by 11AM Tuesday August 25
Date: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 8:37:37 AM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 8:13 AM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Media query: J-1 visas VOA

Dear USAGM,

I wanted to follow up on my request, emailed yesterday, seeking updates on the visa review and comment on claims made in the course of my reporting. My deadline is 11AM today (Aug. 25).

Please can you provide an update on the visa review announced on July 11, including when the review will be finished and details of its findings made public.

Can you please provide details on the number of J-1 holders at VOA whose visas have expired since the review was started, and whose visas will expire by Sept. 30.

Will USAGM take steps to reinstate these employees and their visas pending the results of the review?

Please provide comment on the following claims:

That USAGM human resources failed to communicate clearly with journalist affected by the J-1 delays, or provide updates on how the visa review will impact their status

That the visa renewals risk putting VOA journalists in danger if forced to return to a hostile home country such as China

To meet my deadline, please provide comment by 11AM Tuesday August 25.

Kind regards,

(b) (6)
[Redacted Signature]

Press Freedom Editor
Voice of America

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 2:42 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)

Subject: Media query: J-1 visas VOA

Dear USAGM,

I am reporting on the J-1 visa issue at VOA, and would like to request an update on the visa review as well as comment on the following claims made in the course of my reporting. My deadline is 11AM, Tuesday Aug. 25.

Please can you provide an update on the visa review announced on July 11, including when the review will be finished and details of its findings made public.

Can you please provide details on the number of J-1 holders at VOA whose visas have expired since the review was started, and whose visas will expire by Sept. 30.

Will USAGM take steps to reinstate these employees and their visas pending the results of the review?

Please provide comment on the following claims:

That USAGM human resources failed to communicate clearly with journalist affected by the J-1 delays, or provide updates on how the visa review will impact their status

That the visa renewals risk putting VOA journalists in danger if forced to return to a hostile home country such as China

To meet my deadline, please provide comment by 11AM Tuesday August 25.

Kind regards,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Press Freedom Editor

Voice of America

From: (b) (6)
To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Madeleine Hubbard](#)
Subject: Follow-up Media Inquiry from VOA: Court injunction on USAGM
Date: Saturday, November 21, 2020 2:17:33 PM

From: (b) (6)
Date: November 21, 2020 at 2:13:48 PM EST
To: USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6), Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Media query: Court injunction on USAGM

Dear USAGM,

I wanted to follow up on my earlier request for USAGM comment on an order issued by a DC court yesterday that in part grants preliminary injunction to protect VOA's editorial independence.

Does USAGM have comment on the order?

The order denied injunction on some issues and says USAGM scrutiny of J-1 visas falls under USAGM's "review responsibilities"

Please can you provide an update on how many J-1 visas have been reviewed, and what the results of those cases are?

VOA Indonesian journalist Nabila Ganinda's J-1 visa request and application for a Green Card sponsorship was denied last month. What was USAGM's reason and findings that led to the denial?

My deadline was 2PM. I can push that to 3pm if you are able to respond.
Kind regards,

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Saturday, November 21, 2020 9:53 AM
To: USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6); Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Media query: Court injunction on USAGM

Dear USAGM

I am reporting for Voice of America on an order issued by a DC court yesterday that in part grants preliminary injunction to protect VOA's editorial independence.

Please provide comment by 2PM ET today on the court order.

The court order says USAGM scrutiny of J-1 visas falls under USAGM's "review responsibilities."

Please can you provide an update on how many J-1 visas have been reviewed, and what the results of those cases are?

VOA Indonesian journalist Nabila Ganinda's J-1 visa request and application for a Green Card sponsorship was denied last month. What was USAGM's reason and findings that led to the denial?

Kindly respond by 2PM today,

Regards,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Press Freedom Editor
Voice Of America
A Free Press Matters

Phone (b) (6)

Twitter

Signal:

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Follow-up Media Inquiry: Phnom Penh Post in Cambodia
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 2:47:06 PM

Hello Jonathan,

On Monday (8-24), I forwarded an inquiry to you from this reporter [he's with the Phnom Penh Post in Cambodia].

thanks,

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2020 2:38 PM
To: (b) (6) USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Cc: Public Relations (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Press inquiry referral

(b) (6),

Thank you for your interest in Voice of America. Your inquiry has been passed along us at VOA Public Relations.

We are, in turn, passing along all press requests on the J-1 visa issue to USAGM Public Affairs, which is responding to these requests and is on this e-mail.

In the future, when you have press inquiries on other VOA matters, we ask that you pass them along to our Public Relations staff, on the CC line.

Best regards,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)
Deputy Director (Outreach and Engagement)
VOA Public Relations
330 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20237
Direct (b) (6)
Main: (b) (6)
Cell: (b) (6)

(b) (6)

www.insidevoa.com

@insidevoa

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2020 12:17 PM

To: (b) (6)

Subject: Press inquiry

Dear Sir

AP has reported that some VOA foreign staff will be forced to leave the US when their Visa expires.

Are there any Khmer staff?

Are they worried and Why?

What can you do if Cambodian staffs are forced to leave?

Best regard,

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Follow-up Media Inquiry: TRNN Correspondent Reaching Out
Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 9:47:21 AM

From: Aman Azhar (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 9:28 AM
To: Michael Pack (b) (6); Public Affairs (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Subject: TRNN Correspondent Reaching Out

Good morning Mr. Pack and USAGM Team:

I sent below queries on August 4 and have followed up a number of times since. I've spoken with VOA public affairs as well who say USAGM is taking the lead on the matter involving suspension of VOA contractors. I'm filling my report today and writing my questions down again for your input.

- 1) Has any responsibility been fixed at the level of full time supervisory staff including service chief and the person managing social media portfolio?
- 2) Is USAGM/VOA following a policy of not renewing J-1 visas given that several contractors are awaiting renewal and noClear word is offered by the two managements?

Thanks and looking forward to hearing from your office.

My best regards,

- Aman

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Aman Azhar (b) (6)
Date: Tue, Aug 4, 2020 at 3:24 PM
Subject: TRNN Correspondent Reaching Out
To: (b) (6)
CC: (b) (6)

Dear Mr. Pack:

I hope this finds you well. I'm a correspondent for The Real News (realnews.com) and following up on the recent reports about the serious violations committed by VOA (Urdu language service) that your office is investigating. I would much appreciate if your office could bring some additional clarity to my reporting and provide responses to the following questions:

1. What measures are being taken to investigate this matter thoroughly and fix the responsibility given the seriousness of the violations including the violation of VOA charter

and the Hatch Act, interference in US elections and criminal negligence of editorial oversight?

2. What safeguards are available to VOA managers to ensure that the VOA charter is followed and the US national security interests are protected?

3. There is an impression that the contractors (PSCs) with no supervisory powers are being scapegoated, whereas the supervising full time staff responsible for day-to-day editorial oversight are being protected. Can you clarify if any action has been taken against the service chief and other managing staff for instance?

4. Will the investigations determine whether the managers of the service have the required qualifications, experience and skill sets to provide leadership on matters involving national security and securing US national interests in their day-to-day programming?

5. How would your leadership ensure that such serious violations do not take place in future that can compromise US national interests by harming the reputation of the national broadcaster and exposing it to criticism from international adversaries?

While I look forward to your considered response on the above, please feel free to reach me on my direct line: (b) (6)

Thank you and I look forward to hearing what you have to say.

- Aman

--

=====
Aman Azhar
Correspondent
The Real News Network (TRNN)
Pronouns: He/Him
M: (b) (6)
T: @TheAmanAzhar
W: therealnews.com

--

=====
Aman Azhar
Climate Change Correspondent
The Real News Network (TRNN)
Pronouns: He/Him
M: (b) (6)
T: @TheAmanAzhar
W: therealnews.com

The future depends on knowing. Donate today at therealnews.com/donate

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: For review: Draft of USAGM Style Guide
Date: Monday, September 28, 2020 3:00:25 PM
Attachments: [USAGM Style Guide - September 14 Draft with edits.docx](#)
[image001.png](#)

Hi Jonathan.

Here is the latest draft of the USAGM Style Guide for you to look over when you get a chance. Would you have time later this week to chat and provide your thoughts? Say Thursday or Friday?

This draft has been reviewed, edited, and approved by:

(b) (6)

Regarding the PAR that is sent to Congress, we agreed that we would use this Style Guide to the extent possible, but there are sections of the PAR that are basically standardized (accountants' section, for example). All PAR-related content on the website would adhere to this guide.

We looked at various other Style Guides from other federal agencies, as seen [here](#) and this PDF from [GPO](#). We also looked at a copy of the State Department's Style Guide, which isn't available online, but you can see a version [here](#).

Thanks!

(b) (6)



(b) (6)

Communications Specialist, Office of Public Affairs

p: (b) (6)

m: (b) (6)

(b) (6)

U.S. Agency for Global Media
330 Independence Ave. SW | Washington, DC 20237
<http://usagm.gov>

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
Subject: From: Brian Padden <bpadden@VOANews.COM>
Date: Thursday, August 6, 2020 11:43:47 AM

From: (b) (6)
Date: August 6, 2020 at 10:58:43 AM EDT
To: VOA NewsCenter (b) (6)
Subject: Draft Staff Concerns

Hi Concerned Staff,

As discussed I have written a short overarching request that I would like to send the VOA and USAGM front offices on behalf of newsroom staff.

(b) (6) and (b) (6) and our other leaders have been representing us well but if might help if we add our vices, names as well.

Please take a look at the rough draft below and email me (probably better to respond only to me to prevent chaos) and let me what details to add or to sign on.

Draft:

(b) (5)



Thank you for your consideration and we await your response.

Signed,

(b) (6)

Central News Correspondent

Voice of America

(b) (6)

Cell - (b) (6)

(b) (6)

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Sam Dewey](#)
Subject: FW:
Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 7:10:00 PM
Attachments: (b) (5)

From: Jonathan Bronitsky
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 12:29 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Sam Dewey (b) (6)
Subject:

Subject: FW:
Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 7:10:29 PM
Attachments: (b) (5)

From: Jonathan Bronitsky
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 12:29 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Sam Dewey (b) (6)
Subject:

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: Assistance creating Master Q&As on Tibet - NEW DEADLINE - noon tomorrow Friday
Date: Thursday, September 10, 2020 11:30:20 AM
Attachments: [Master DRL Tibet Q&As.docx](#)

FYSA

I'll send you the final talkers sent by OPR and RFA for your awareness.

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2020 10:30 AM
To: (b) (6)

(b) (6)

(b) (6) Public

Relations (b) (6)

(b) (6)

Subject: RE: Assistance creating Master Q&As on Tibet - NEW DEADLINE - noon tomorrow Friday

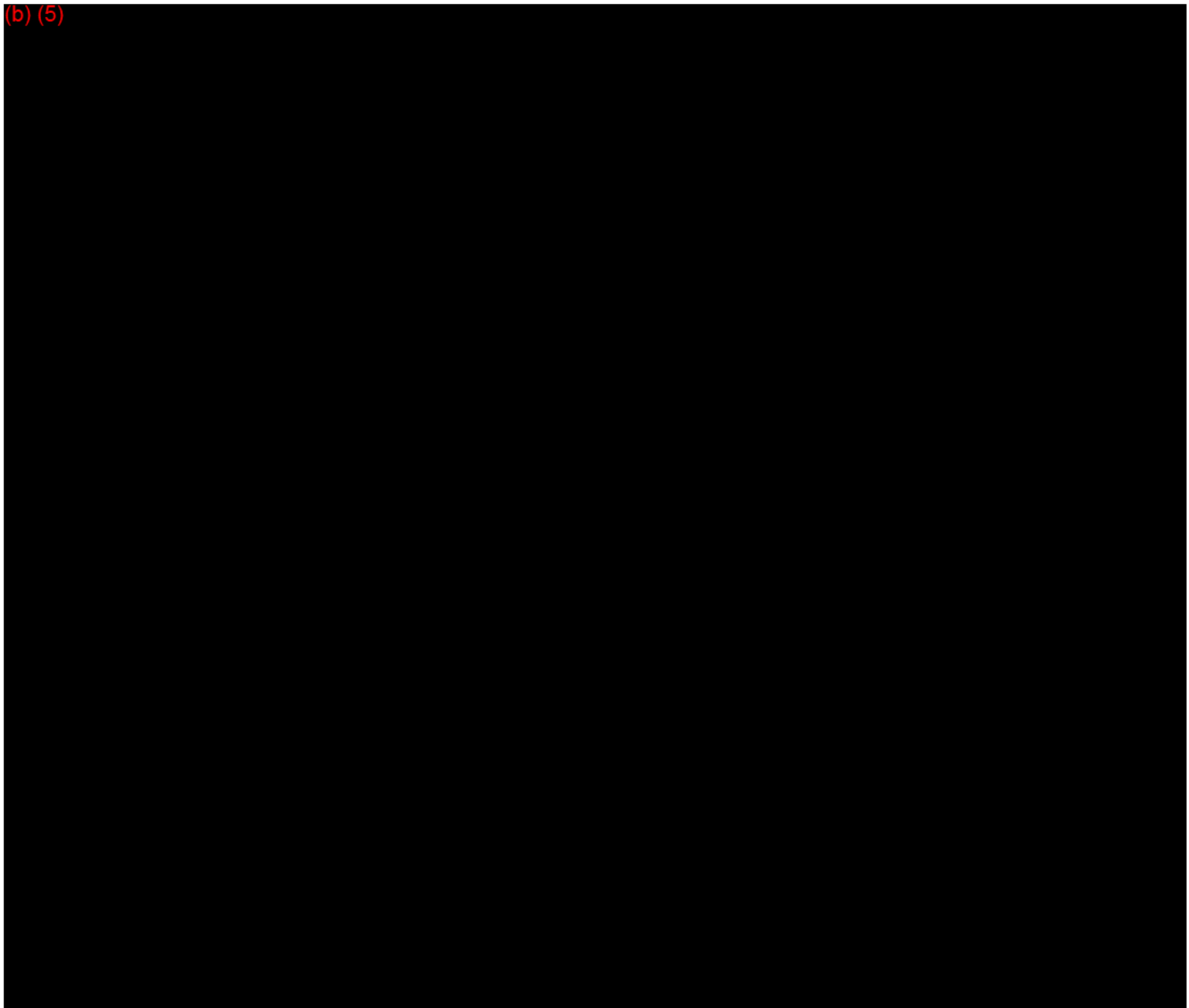
Apologies for the short fuse, we've had to change the deadline to noon tomorrow, Friday, September 11, due to possible congressional briefings happening next week. Adding some additional colleagues to this email.

I've included the document as an attachment for our USAID, VOA, and RFA colleagues to use. I've added two questions on programing (over to you, ECA and USAID) and the recent "sinicizing" comment from (b) (6).

As always, feel free to give me a call or email with any questions. I'm available.

(b) (6)
Foreign Affairs Officer – India, Nepal, and Bhutan
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
South and Central Asia (DRL/SCA)
Office: (b) (6)

(b) (5)



 [Master DRL Tibet Q&As.docx](#)

Best,

(b) (6)



Foreign Affairs Officer for Bhutan, India, and Nepal
Office of South & Central Asia
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
Currently teleworking; please call (b) (6)



From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Diane Cullo](#); [Toni DeLancey](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: Can you tell me how VOA international journalists are faring?
Date: Friday, December 4, 2020 12:54:57 PM

FYI

(b) (6)
Acting Director of Public Affairs
United States Agency for Global Media
Washington DC 20237
W: (b) (6)
M: (b) (6)
(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, December 4, 2020 12:48 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: FW: Can you tell me how VOA international journalists are faring?

Hello (b) (6)

I'm a writer working on an op-ed for one of my local newspapers about international VOA journalists being denied their visas to remain in the U.S. and live and report here. I'm also a former board member at the National VOA Museum of Broadcasting, which piqued my interest in VOA's history, as well as the VOA today.

--Can you tell me how many international VOA journalists have been expelled from the U.S. and are now repatriated to their home countries since the USAGM decision to deny them visas this summer?

--Does anyone at the VOA keep in touch with them to keep up to date on how they are faring—whether they are able to gain employment, or have been harassed, arrested or imprisoned?

Thanks for responding as soon as you can. If you'd like to talk on the phone, I can be reached at (b) (6)

Take care and be well,

(b) (6)
West Chester, Ohio

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Toni DeLancey](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: Can you tell me how VOA international journalists are faring?
Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 4:17:49 PM

(b) (6)
Acting Director of Public Affairs
United States Agency for Global Media
Washington DC 20237
W: (b) (6)
M: (b) (6)
(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 1:21 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Can you tell me how VOA international journalists are faring?

Hello (b) (6),

I was told that you were the source for this information.

--Can you tell me how many international VOA journalists have been expelled from the U.S. and are now repatriated to their home countries since the USAGM decision to deny them J-1 visas this summer?

--Does anyone at the VOA keep in touch with them to keep up to date on how they are faring—whether they are able to gain employment, or have been harassed, arrested or imprisoned?

Thanks for responding as soon as you can. I'm a writer following this issue. If you or another USAGM spokesperson would like to talk on the phone for an interview I can be reached at (b) (6)

I look forward to hearing from you.

Take care and be well,

(b) (6)
West Chester, Ohio

(b) (6)

From: [Elez Biberaj](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: [Elez Biberaj](#)
Subject: FW: Central News Staff Concerns
Date: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 12:09:01 PM

Greetings, Jonathan!

FYI.

Your suggestions for a response would be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

Elez

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 7:06 AM
To: VOA Town Hall (b) (6); Elez Biberaj (b) (6)
Subject: Central News Staff Concerns

Elez Biberaj - Acting VOA Director,

Thank you for your recent update to staff that emphasized the Voice of America's journalistic independence, and noting that "any breach of our journalistic standards has a lasting adverse impact and it endangers the entire VOA and its mission."

With this in mind, I am writing on behalf of concerned staff in Central News who are troubled by misleading comments from USAGM officials about security clearances, along with other recent measures taken that undermine VOA's journalistic credibility.

Regarding the OPM report on clearances in the agency, unnamed USAGM officials have been quoted in media reports amplifying the security threat, stating that "this has left USAGM and our nation gravely exposed," and that unvetted foreign born VOA journalists have the "ability to shape our nation's global narrative."

However, these USAGM sources failed to clarify that VOA journalists do not handle or work with classified material, are not issued diplomatic passports, and that their reporting is not subject to oversight by the White House, State Department or any other outside U.S. government agency.

And they failed to underscore, as you have in your recent staff update, that VOA "editorial oversight procedures and quality controls" are in place to ensure that all content produced adheres to the principles of our VOA Charter, and that these controls are being strengthened in light of the recent incident in the Urdu Service.

By giving the false impression that VOA journalists are no different than diplomats with "top secret level" security clearances and access to classified information, the misguided comments

by USAGM officials make it more difficult for reporters in the field, especially those overseas, to counter criticism that they are U.S. government agents and their reporting is biased.

We call on VOA to issue a public statement clarifying that VOA journalists do not have access to classified material, and that the vast sum of VOA reporting adheres to journalistic standards of fairness and balance mandated by the VOA Charter.

We request a Teams virtual meeting in the next week with you, acting Director Biberaj, and USAGM director Michael Pack to discuss these and other concerns.

We also object to recent measures that reduce the organization's journalistic capabilities – terminating visas for language service reporters, imposing a spending freeze that put contractor jobs in limbo, and in showcasing editorials that fail to adhere to the VOA charter requirement that U.S. policies will be presented “clearly and effectively, and will also present responsible discussions and opinion.”

These actions run counter to Mr. Pack's stated promises to protect VOA's journalistic integrity and improve employee morale.

Thank you for your consideration and we await your response.

Signed,

Concerned Central News Journalists

(b) (6)
Central News Correspondent
Voice of America

(b) (6)
Cell - (b) (6)
(b) (6)

Subject: FW: CEO Pack releases OPM report detailing long-standing USAGM security failures
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 2:22:41 PM
Attachments: [OPM-SuitEA-July-2020.pdf](#)
[image003.png](#)

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [CEO2016](#)
Cc: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Thad Strom](#)
Subject: FW: CEO responsibilities + reg memo (drafts)
Date: Friday, October 23, 2020 5:50:00 PM
Attachments: (b) (5)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-
Michael,

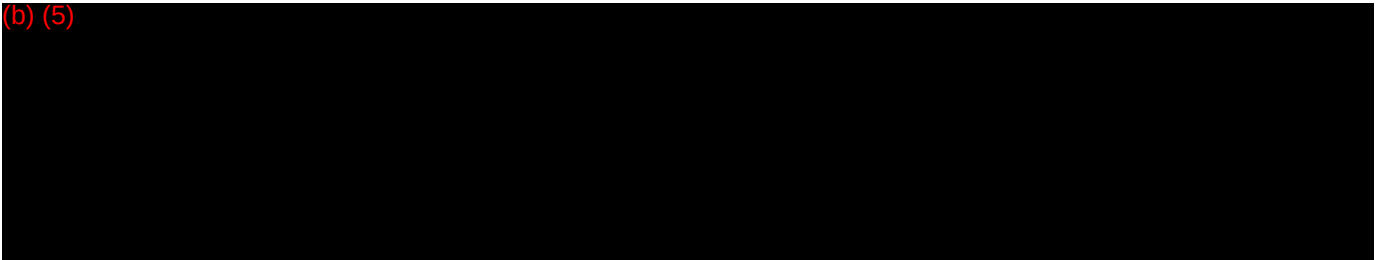
(b) (5)

V/R,
Jonathan

From: [Diane Cullo](#)
To: (b) (6); [Public Affairs](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Fw: COMMENT ON USC FINDING
Date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 6:58:27 PM

(b) (6): Please respond all to the below email from the Public Affairs email box with the following:

(b) (5)



From: David Folkenflik (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 6:17 PM
To: Diane Cullo (b) (6); [Public Affairs](#) (b) (6)
Cc: Michael Pack (b) (6)
Subject: COMMENT ON USC FINDING

Diane:

The office of special counsel has found a "Substantial likelihood of wrongdoing" at USAGM since June 20 and ordered Michael Pack to initiate an investigation of alleged firewall violations, gross mismanagement, wrongful withholding of visa extensions and more.

What's Michael's comment? Unless you can promise to offer comment and ask for a delay, I am likely to post within the hour.

As ever, I would prefer to speak directly to Michael.

Thank you.

DBF

David Folkenflik
Media Correspondent
NPR NEWS
11 W 42nd St
19th Floor
New York NY 10036
o) (b) (6)

mobile) (b) (6)
e) (b) (6)
Twitter: (b) (6)

From: [Diane Cullo](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Sam Dewey](#)
Subject: Fw: COMMENT ON USC FINDING
Date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 6:47:19 PM

From: David Folkenflik (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 6:17 PM
To: Diane Cullo (b) (6); Public Affairs (b) (6)
Cc: Michael Pack (b) (6)
Subject: COMMENT ON USC FINDING

Diane:

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Thank you.

DBF

David Folkenflik
Media Correspondent
NPR NEWS
11 W 42nd St
19th Floor
New York NY 10036
o) (b) (6)
mobile) (b) (6)
e) (b) (6)
Twitter: (b) (6)

From: [Diane Cullo](#)
To: [Sam Dewey](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Fw: COMMENT ON USC FINDING
Date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 7:52:21 PM

From: David Folkenflik (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 7:50 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Cc: Diane Cullo (b) (6); Michael Pack (b) (6)
Subject: Re: COMMENT ON USC FINDING

Hey. The notes to whistleblowers were filed by Karen Tanenbaum of US Special Counsel's office of retaliation and disclosure unit. But the office sent the order for an investigation to CEO Pack and presumably other relevant agency officials. Yours is the original order; what I obtained is a reflection of that.

David Folkenflik
Media Correspondent, NPR News
11 W 42nd St
19th Floor
New York NY 10036
o) (b) (6)
m) (b) (6)
e) (b) (6)

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 2, 2020, at 7:17 PM, Public Affairs (b) (6) wrote:

Thank you for your inquiry. Please be advised that the Office of Public Affairs is responsible for supplying responses to all media inquiries.

In order to respond adequately to your query, please provide the documents you are referencing.

From: David Folkenflik (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 6:17 PM
To: Diane Cullo (b) (6); Public Affairs (b) (6)
Cc: Michael Pack (b) (6)
Subject: COMMENT ON USC FINDING

Diane:

The office of special counsel has found a "Substantial likelihood of wrongdoing" at USAGM since June 20 and ordered Michael Pack to initiate an investigation of alleged firewall violations, gross mismanagement, wrongful withholding of visa extensions and more.

What's Michael's comment? Unless you can promise to offer comment and ask for a delay, I am likely to post within the hour.

As ever, I would prefer to speak directly to Michael.

Thank you.

DBF

David Folkenflik
Media Correspondent
NPR NEWS
11 W 42nd St
19th Floor
New York NY 10036
o) (b) (6)
mobile) (b) (6)
e) (b) (6)
Twitter: (b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: Concern that visa review could force dozens of Voice of America journalists to leave the United States
Date: Thursday, July 16, 2020 2:42:09 PM

Hi Jonathan, FYI, Mr. Pack is cc'd on this.

thx, (b) (6)

From: Robert Rutkowski (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 2:32:05 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6); Michael Pack (b) (6)

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Subject: Concern that visa review could force dozens of Voice of America journalists to leave the United States

Michael Pack, CEO
US Agency for Global Media's (USAGM)
330 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20037
Tel: (b) (6)
Email: (b) (6)

Re: Concern that visa review could force dozens of Voice of America journalists to leave the United States

Dear Mr Pack:

Alarm is expressed by the US Agency for Global Media's (USAGM) recent announcement that it will be doing a case-by-case assessment of at least 76 Voice of America journalists' J-1 visa renewal applications, meaning they may be forced to leave the United States when their visas expire.

A spokesperson for USAGM announced on July 9 that the agency is assessing renewal applications for J-1 visas at Voice of America (VOA), one of the broadcasters overseen by USAGM. You allegedly signalled that you would not approve visa extensions. Sixty-two contractors and 14 full-time VOA employees currently working in the United States on J-1 visas are at risk of being forced to return to their home countries, where some could face retaliation due to their reporting. An unknown number of foreign journalists at USAGM's other media entities are affected by this decision as well.

Foreign journalists are crucial to the mission of USAGM's media outlets, which is to produce news in dozens of languages so citizens in nations

without independent media can access reliable reporting. Failing to extend the visas these journalists rely on to work in the United States only empowers governments that restrict freedom of information, and more critically, it could endanger the safety of journalists who have been working for USAGM media outlets when they return to their home nations. USAGM should quickly reverse course to ensure these journalists can remain in the United States, where they can work safely and help further the agency's mission to inform.

This is not the first decision you have made since being appointed CEO of USAGM that threatens to weaken the agency's media outlets. Just weeks after your confirmation, you abruptly removed the heads of four of the agency's news outlets on June 17 in what was described as the "Wednesday night massacre." At the time, RSF called on USAGM and the new heads of each outlet to respect their independence, as required by the agency's statutory "firewall" protecting USAGM outlets from outside editorial interference.

Yours sincerely,
Robert E. Rutkowski

cc:

Senator Mitch McConnell
Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

(b) (6)

Representative Kevin McCarthy
Republican Majority Leader
Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

(b) (6)

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
Office of the Speaker
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

(b) (6)

Senator Chuck Schumer
Senate Democratic Leader
Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

(b) (6)

Representative Steny Hoyer
House Majority Leader
Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

(b) (6)

2527 Faxon Court
Topeka, Kansas 66605-2086

P/F: (b) (6)

E-mail: (b) (6)

From: [Diane Cullo](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: Correction - Re: Articles FYI
Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 11:34:13 AM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 11:33 AM
To: Diane Cullo (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Correction - Re: Articles FYI

Hi Diane,

I normally search Google news -- US Agency for Global Media, the networks, OTF, Michael Pack.

thanks,

(b) (6)

From: Diane Cullo (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 11:28 AM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: FW: Correction - Re: Articles FYI

(b) (6) :

How are these clips gathered for distribution?

Diane

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2020 9:53 AM
To: USAGM Media Clips (b) (6)
Subject: Correction - Re: Articles FYI

Apologies all:

The article below was published in 2019 not 2020.

[Aibek Kulchumanov Radio Free EuropeRadio Liberty](#)

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre
September 28, 2020 2019

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Monday, September 28, 2020 9:23 AM

To: USAGM Media Clips (b) (6)

Subject: Articles FYI

[US cuts \\$20m in funding for group helping pro-democracy efforts in Iran](#)

Open Technology Fund supports activists operating in Iran, Belarus and Hong Kong, helping them bypass internet censorship and state surveillance

Middle East Eye

September 25, 2020

MEE staff

[Trump led Admin Stops Aid For Pro-democracy Groups In Belarus, Hong Kong And Iran](#)

Finance Rewind

September 27, 2020

Suhani Chaudhary

[The Inside Story of How Signal Became the Private Messaging App for an Age of Fear and Distrust](#)

TIME

September 25, 2020

Billy Perrigo

[Washington finally admits it has been interfering in Hong Kong](#)

Members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee have blasted Michael Pack, the new czar of the US government's global media services, for stymieing US influence operations in the city

South China Morning Post

September 25, 2020

Alex Lo

[Trump Administration Proposes New Rule to Severely Restrict Student Visas](#)

The Slate

September 25, 2020

Whitney Tesi

[Aibek Kulchumanov Radio Free EuropeRadio Liberty](#)

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre

September 28, 2020

[Public Diplomacy and the New “Old” War: Countering State-Sponsored Disinformation \(2020\)](#)

US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy

ACPD SPECIAL REPORT

September 25, 2020

[Mike Pompeo’s South America Trip Demonstrates Need for Sustained Commitment](#)

It is time for Washington to make clear that partnership with the United States offers more opportunity and promise than working with China.

The National Interest

September 26, 2020

James Jay Carafano Ana Quintana

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: Edited, cleared blog post and final report "Addressing Disinformation"
Date: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 2:51:58 PM
Attachments: [USAGM-OPR-AddressingDisinformation-08-26-2020.pdf](#)
[Revised Disinfo blog pmp.final.docx](#)

FYI on this.

(b) (6) just pinged us that the report and blog should be removed from the website per Frank. There was also a question of whether the front office cleared. , no

(b) (6) has removed them from the site. Per the clearance grid below, Frank/Gary may not have seen this (might be before they assumed their OPR roles). I've pinged (b) (6) to confirm.

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2020 4:17 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: FW: Edited, cleared blog post and final report "Addressing Disinformation"

This is what was approved.

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 6:28 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Edited, cleared blog post and final report "Addressing Disinformation"

Hi Jonathan

Here is an edited, cleared version of OPR's report and blog post about disinformation that we would like to post on the site.

Approved by:

(b) (6)

Let us know what you think!

Thanks!

(b) (6)

Communications Specialist - Writer-Editor

U.S. Agency for Global Media

Washington, D.C. 20237

(b) (6)

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Subject: FW: Follow-up Media Inquiry from VOA News: J-1 visas VOA - please provide comment by 11AM Tuesday August 25
Date: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 9:36:00 AM

FYA

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 8:38 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Follow-up Media Inquiry from VOA News: J-1 visas VOA - please provide comment by 11AM Tuesday August 25

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 8:13 AM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Media query: J-1 visas VOA

Dear USAGM,

I wanted to follow up on my request, emailed yesterday, seeking updates on the visa review and comment on claims made in the course of my reporting. My deadline is 11AM today (Aug. 25).

Please can you provide an update on the visa review announced on July 11, including when the review will be finished and details of its findings made public.

Can you please provide details on the number of J-1 holders at VOA whose visas have expired since the review was started, and whose visas will expire by Sept. 30.

Will USAGM take steps to reinstate these employees and their visas pending the results of the review?

Please provide comment on the following claims:

That USAGM human resources failed to communicate clearly with journalist affected by the J-1 delays, or provide updates on how the visa review will impact their status

That the visa renewals risk putting VOA journalists in danger if forced to return to a hostile home country such as China

To meet my deadline, please provide comment by 11AM Tuesday August 25.

Kind regards,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Press Freedom Editor
Voice of America

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 2:42 PM

To: Public Affairs (b) (6)

Subject: Media query: J-1 visas VOA

Dear USAGM,

I am reporting on the J-1 visa issue at VOA, and would like to request an update on the visa review as well as comment on the following claims made in the course of my reporting. My deadline is 11AM, Tuesday Aug. 25.

Please can you provide an update on the visa review announced on July 11, including when the review will be finished and details of its findings made public.

Can you please provide details on the number of J-1 holders at VOA whose visas have expired since the review was started, and whose visas will expire by Sept. 30.

Will USAGM take steps to reinstate these employees and their visas pending the results of the review?

Please provide comment on the following claims:

That USAGM human resources failed to communicate clearly with journalist affected by the J-1 delays, or provide updates on how the visa review will impact their status

That the visa renewals risk putting VOA journalists in danger if forced to return to a hostile home country such as China

To meet my deadline, please provide comment by 11AM Tuesday August 25.

Kind regards,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Press Freedom Editor
Voice of America

From: (b) (6)
To: (b) (6); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: Foreign Travel Reporting
Date: Thursday, December 10, 2020 9:15:04 PM
Attachments: [USAGM SEC Travel Briefing Packet.docx](#)
[image001.png](#)

FYI – (b) (6) is on it.

Thanks, (b) (6)!

(b) (6)
Special Agent in Charge
Office of Security, Investigations and CI Branch

p. (b) (6)
m. (b) (6)
f. (b) (6)

GREEN: (b) (6)

RED: (b) (6)



U.S. Agency for Global Media | Broadcasting Board of Governors
330 Independence Ave., SW | Washington, DC 20237
<http://usagm.gov>

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2020 9:06 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Foreign Travel Reporting (b) (6)
Subject: Foreign Travel Reporting

Good Evening (b) (6):

I hope you have been well! It's been a while since we have spoken.

I'm sorry for writing you so late, but our office was notified that you were planning on traveling outside of the US. I'm not sure if you are aware, but anytime you travel outside of the US (for official travel or personal travel), you need to report it to our office at (b) (6) (cc'd here).

I have included the agency's travel security briefing here. If you haven't left yet, please read through the materials, then complete the briefing acknowledgement form on page 13 and return it to me. When you get back from your trip, complete the de-brief form on page 14 and return it to me. If you have left already, please let me know your destination(s) and dates of travel, and you can return the briefing and de-briefing form to me when you return.

I also encourage you to visit the Department of State's website with country information pages for each country. These have valuable information on safety/security, embassy/consulate information, and important travel alerts. Each country page also has a link to sign up for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), which I highly recommend. This will automatically push travel alerts to your phone and it gives the embassy a way to contact you in case of emergency. It is also important that you familiarize yourself with the rules of the host country on COVID. Here is the link:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>

Last, but certainly not least, our office has received information indicating that the Iranian government may be currently targeting or seeking to do harm to prominent opposition voices. Travelling outside of the US certainly leaves you more vulnerable, so I want to make sure that you remain extra vigilant when you travel. Please be aware of your surroundings at all time, and take extra precautions whenever possible. An alert will be sent agency wide either later tonight or tomorrow morning.

Thank you, and let me know if you have any questions. Stay safe!

Sincerely,

(b) (6)
Special Agent, Investigations Branch
Insider Threat Program Manager
United States Agency for Global Media
Office of Security
330 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20237

(b) (6) (Office)
(b) (6) (Cell)
(b) (6) (Fax)

Email (b) (6)

OpenNet: (b) (6)

ClassNet: (b) (6)

From: [Frank Wuco](#)
To: (b) (6); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [John Jagers](#)
Subject: FW: Foreign Travel Reporting
Date: Thursday, December 10, 2020 9:16:34 PM
Attachments: [USAGM SEC Travel Briefing Packet.docx](#)
[image001.png](#)

+ John Jagers

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2020 9:15 PM
To: (b) (6); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#) (b) (6);
[Frank Wuco](#) (b) (6); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#) (b) (6)
Subject: FW: Foreign Travel Reporting

FYI – (b) (6) is on it.

Thanks, (b) (6) !

(b) (6)
Special Agent in Charge
Office of Security, Investigations and CI Branch

p. (b) (6)
m. (b) (6)
f. (b) (6)

GREEN: (b) (6)

RED: (b) (6)



U.S. Agency for Global Media | Broadcasting Board of Governors
330 Independence Ave., SW | Washington, DC 20237
<http://usagm.gov>

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2020 9:06 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Foreign Travel Reporting (b) (6)
Subject: Foreign Travel Reporting

Good Evening (b) (6) :

I hope you have been well! It's been a while since we have spoken.

I'm sorry for writing you so late, but our office was notified that you were planning on traveling

outside of the US. I'm not sure if you are aware, but anytime you travel outside of the US (for official travel or personal travel), you need to report it to our office at (b) (6) (cc'd here).

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Thank you, and let me know if you have any questions. Stay safe!

Sincerely,

(b) (6)
Special Agent, Investigations Branch
Insider Threat Program Manager
United States Agency for Global Media
Office of Security
330 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20237

(b) (6) (Office)
(b) (6) (Cell)
(b) (6) (Fax)

Email: (b) (6)

OpenNet: (b) (6)

ClassNet: (b) (6)

From: [Michael Lipin](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Fw: Goodbye...
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 12:28:05 PM
Attachments: [VOA 2016-2020 \(6-15-20\).pdf](#)

FYI!

From: Amanda Bennett (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2020 11:18 AM
To: VOA Notices (b) (6)
Subject: Goodbye...

June 15, 2020

Friends --

It is time for us to leave you.

This morning we sent our resignations to Michael Pack, the newly-arrived CEO of the US Agency for Global Media. As the Senate-confirmed CEO, he has the right to replace us with his own VOA leadership. We depart with the gratitude and joy that has marked our time together, with a dedication to our mission and admiration for each one of you.

Just think of what we have accomplished together! When we arrived in 2016 you said you wanted big change -- and you were true to your word. Creating change was hard, complex, painstaking. It required days, weeks, months of hard work from so many of you. Yet the results are very clear -- your rapid, can-do response to the Coronavirus crisis, your growing enthusiasm for collegiality and sharing; your leap to the top of your digital markets; your compassionate and compelling quest to tell America's story; your focus on pushing back on untruths and disinformation around the world; your attention to the stories of women, of refugees and of your press colleagues around the world.

Nothing about you, your passion, your mission or your integrity changes. Michael Pack swore before Congress to respect and honor the firewall that guarantees VOA's independence, which in turn plays the single most important role in the stunning trust our audiences around the world have in us. We know that each one of you will offer him all of your skills, your professionalism, your dedication to mission, your journalistic integrity and your personal hard work to guarantee that promise is fulfilled.

Just to remind you of the power and force that you have all around the world -- with help from many of you, we have created a small gift. Attached is the history of the changes you all wrought in the last four years. At the end of the document we attached links to a sampling of VOA's work in as many of our 47 languages as possible. We also sent this document to Michael Pack and we know he will be impressed at what he sees. Every one

of you used every bit of your passion, skills, creativity and hard work to create these changes. Please look it all over and stop for a moment to savor your own accomplishments and those of your colleagues. We will always be grateful for the chance we were given to work with each one of you. Our only regret is that the coronavirus prevents us from saying a proper goodbye to each one of you. You are remarkable people with a remarkable mission. We are so proud to have been a part of that mission.

Our best,

Amanda and Sandy

From: [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
To: [CEO2016](#); [Sam Dewey](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Robert Patterson](#)
Subject: FW: J-1 Visa Grievances
Date: Wednesday, October 14, 2020 12:51:44 PM
Importance: High

FYI

Please do not discuss with anyone outside this chain.

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2020 12:49 PM
To: Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6)
Cc: Elez Biberaj (b) (6)
Subject: J-1 Visa Grievances

Hi Emily,

The USAGM Equal Employment Opportunity Office has six requests for Alternative Dispute Resolutions regarding the CEO's decision not to extend J-1 visas. I serve as VOA's representative in these mediations. The first mediation is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 19.

Since this was a CEO policy, we need a single letter to explain the rationale or policy behind the decision not to extend the visas. This will allow the EEO to pass over the requests for ADR and move to the next stage of the grievance process.

Could your office please issue a letter to the EEO explaining the policy?

Thanks,

(b) (6)

VOA

*Senior Advisor to the Director
330 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20237*

(b) (6)

NOTICE: This e-mail message contains confidential, privileged information intended solely for the addressee. Please do not forward this message without permission. To maintain attorney-client confidentiality, this message should be distributed only within the agency to employees having a need for this information.

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: FW: J-1 visa press follow-up
Date: Friday, July 24, 2020 4:15:20 PM

Jonathan -- FYI below

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 3:39 PM
To: Rafael Bernal (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6) USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6) (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: J-1 visa follow-up

Hi Rafael,

Thanks for reaching out. This is a question for USAGM, so I'm copying our colleagues at USAGM Public Affairs on this chain.

Best,

(b) (6)
VOA Public Relations Officer

From: Rafael Bernal (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 2:50 PM
To: Public Relations (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: J-1 visa follow-up

Forwarding a request for comment I sent to Jim Fry.

Best,

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Rafael Bernal (b) (6)
Date: Fri, Jul 24, 2020 at 2:46 PM
Subject: J-1 visa follow-up
To: (b) (6)

Hello (b) (6),

Following up on the J-1 visa story, I noticed that Venezuela 360's staff has several journalists on that visa.

Does the agency have a plan to staff the show in the future, once the J-1 visas expire?

Thanks,

Rafael Bernal
Staff Writer

[The Hill](#)

O: (b) (6)

C:

(b) (6)

Subject: FW: Last Week's Article / Politico Article
Date: Friday, October 2, 2020 3:49:46 PM
Attachments: [US Agency for Global Media Reopens Office of Internet Freedom Updated 092520.pdf](#)

From: China Channel LLC - (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, October 1, 2020 9:14 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); Morvared Namdarkhan
(b) (6)
Subject: Last Week's Article / Politico Article

Hi Jonathan & Mora,

I appreciate the clarifications you gave me for last week's article; we quickly updated the story, and the final product is attached.

Are you interested in giving your side of the article that was written in Politico yesterday? If so, I will find out if we can cover it. If the paper asks me to, I would like to come up and do it in person, if that would suit you.

Hoping you are both well, and thank you for working with me to get things right!

All the best,

(b) (6)

White House Correspondent - Freelance

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: Letter to Michael Pack
Date: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 3:25:41 PM
Attachments: [Final Letter.pdf](#)

From: Roshan, Qais (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 12:36 PM
To: Debra Sams (b) (6)
Subject: Letter to Michael Pack

Hello, please find attached a letter from Congressman Kennedy to Michael Pack. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Qais Roshan

--

Qais Roshan
Senior Legislative Assistant
Office of Congressman Joseph P. Kennedy, III
304 Cannon House Office Building

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Morvared Namdarkhan](#); [Sam Dewey](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
Subject: FW: Media Inquiry from Breitbart: RE. the OPM report on security failures.
Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 4:58:00 PM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 4:57 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry from Breitbart: RE. the OPM report on security failures.

From: Neil Munro (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 4:27 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: RE. the OPM report on security failures.

Thanks for the OPM report on security failures. Two questions:

What visas does USAGM use to bring in foreign workers? L1s? J-1s? H-1Bs? F1-OPTs?

Does US-AGM sponsor its employees for green cards?

Does US-AGM use outside contractors to help import foreign employees? If so, which companies?

Yours,

Neil Munro
Breitbart News

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Diane Cullo](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
Subject: FW: Media Inquiry from Breitbart: RE. the OPM report on security failures.
Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 4:59:00 PM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 4:57 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6) >
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry from Breitbart: RE. the OPM report on security failures.

From: Neil Munro (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 4:27 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: RE. the OPM report on security failures.

Thanks for the OPM report on security failures. Two questions:

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Does US-AGM sponsor its employees for green cards?

Does US-AGM use outside contractors to help import foreign employees? If so, which companies?

Yours,

Neil Munro
Breitbart News

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Cc: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: FW: Media Inquiry from VOA News: Request for comment
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 10:29:00 AM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 10:22 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry from VOA News: Request for comment

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 10:17 AM
To: USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6)
Subject: Media query: Request for comment

Dear USAGM,

I am reporting on a Sept. 14 letter that members of the Senate and House sent to USAGM CEO Michael Pack and would like to request comment. My deadline is 4PM today (Sept. 15).

A link to the letter is here: <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/09-14-20%20Letter%20to%20Pack%20on%20Visa%20ExtensionsFINAL1.pdf>

Please could you provide comment on the letter, including whether Mr. Pack intends to respond to the questions laid out in it.

Could you also provide comment and updates on the following:

The status of the J-1 visa review, including when it will be completed and whether its findings will be made public.

Claims that termination letters sent to VOA J-1 journalists included administrative errors and in at least one case that a letter was sent, apparently in error, to a journalist whose visa does not expire until Oct.

Whether USAGM has completed reviews of journalists already forced to return because their J-1 visas expired, and if so, what the review's findings are.

Comment on claims that the visa review has endangered journalists by forcing them to return to countries where they could face retaliation because of their reporting for VOA, or expose them to health risks by having to travel during the pandemic.

Comment on the reasons for delays in renewing contracts in language services, including

the Latin America division that led to at least 10 journalists being forced to stop work and the division having to change its programming and schedules.

Comment on claims that the non-renewal of J-1 visas and delays in contracts are impacting VOA's ability to report.

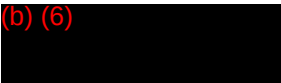
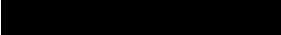
Comment on a letter signed by current and former staff warning that comments and actions by Mr. Pack--including remarks during an interview with the Federalist in which Mr. Pack said the agencies would be a great place to put a spy--endanger the work of USAGM journalists.

Please provide comment by my deadline at 4PM today (Sept. 15).

Kind regards,

(b) (6)

Press Freedom Editor
Voice Of America
A Free Press Matters

Phone: (b) (6)
Twitter: 
Signal: 

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Diane Cullo](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Sam Dewey](#)
Subject: FW: Media query from VOA News: J-1 visas VOA - please provide comment by 11AM Tuesday August 25.
Date: Monday, August 24, 2020 2:59:00 PM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 2:51 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media query from VOA News: J-1 visas VOA - please provide comment by 11AM Tuesday August 25.

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 2:42 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Media query: J-1 visas VOA

Dear USAGM,

I am reporting on the J-1 visa issue at VOA, and would like to request an update on the visa review as well as comment on the following claims made in the course of my reporting. My deadline is 11AM, Tuesday Aug. 25.

Please can you provide an update on the visa review announced on July 11, including when the review will be finished and details of its findings made public.

Can you please provide details on the number of J-1 holders at VOA whose visas have expired since the review was started, and whose visas will expire by Sept. 30.

Will USAGM take steps to reinstate these employees and their visas pending the results of the review?

Please provide comment on the following claims:

That USAGM human resources failed to communicate clearly with journalist affected by the J-1 delays, or provide updates on how the visa review will impact their status

That the visa renewals risk putting VOA journalists in danger if forced to return to a hostile home country such as China

To meet my deadline, please provide comment by 11AM Tuesday August 25.

Kind regards,
(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Press Freedom Editor
Voice of America

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: Message from Acting VOA Director
Date: Friday, July 24, 2020 3:08:37 PM

Jonathan,

In previous workflow, some VOA notices were sent to OPA for forwarding – as is -- to USAGM corporate staff.

I've double checked with (b) (6), and they would like us to forward the note below.

Best,

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 2:56 PM
To: USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: Message from Acting VOA Director

From: VOA House Notices (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 1:58 PM
To: VOA Notices (b) (6)
Cc: Elez Biberaj (b) (6)
Subject: Message from Acting VOA Director

Esteemed Colleagues,

Thanks to everyone for your continued dedication to the Voice of America during these challenging times. Your resilience in a time of constant change to work processes and your perseverance in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic are greatly appreciated.

As you are aware, the USAGM leadership is reviewing the agency's practices. I know that you are interested in learning about possible changes in policies regarding hiring, contracting and visa issues. I want you to know that we are regularly updating and informing USAGM leadership on VOA's requirements necessary to advance our mission and the critical deadlines and priorities, especially those regarding the visa issues and the importance of continuing the services of our talented visa holders. Recruitment, training and retention of our accomplished employees and contractors are at the top of the list among the many challenges and responsibilities that VOA faces. We are working hard to ensure that USAGM leadership understands the vital role that each individual plays in producing VOA content and supporting our mission. Once we receive USAGM guidance on these matters, we will provide you with updates.

VOA is currently in Phase 1 of its multi-phased reconstitution plan. Our first priority is the safety of every member of our workforce. For this reason we are implementing strict protocols with the roll-out that require social distancing, use of PPE and routine cleaning of

the studios and high touch points. As part of Phase 1, the production of a select number of television programs will gradually return to the Cohen Building. In this phase we will continue to maximize telework for most staff members. Please consult with your Division Director should you have any questions about what this means for you.

Our mission has not changed. Credibility is the greatest asset we have and any breach of our journalistic standards will have a lasting adverse impact. We must make every effort to ensure that our coverage remains fact-based, balanced, unbiased and comprehensive and that the content we produce on a daily basis and across all platforms upholds the VOA Charter and adheres to the highest standards of journalistic integrity. Our impressive, worldwide audiences depend on us to continue to provide credible news and information and to maintain the highest quality journalistic standards that have defined VOA for close to 80 years.

Please stay focused on our primary task of advancing our noble mission and let's do our very best to ensure a bright future for VOA!

I wish you all a wonderful weekend.

Sincerely,

Elez

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Diane Cullo](#)
Subject: FW: Message from Acting VOA Director
Date: Friday, July 24, 2020 4:03:00 PM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 3:09 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: FW: Message from Acting VOA Director

Jonathan,

In previous workflow, some VOA notices were sent to OPA for forwarding – as is -- to USAGM corporate staff.

I've double checked with (b) (6), and they would like us to forward the note below.

Best,

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 2:56 PM
To: USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: Message from Acting VOA Director

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Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 1:58 PM
To: VOA Notices (b) (6)
Cc: Elez Biberaj (b) (6)
Subject: Message from Acting VOA Director

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I wish you all a wonderful weekend.

Sincerely,

Elez

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: Message from Acting VOA Director
Date: Friday, July 24, 2020 4:18:00 PM

Hi Jonathan,

Please see USAGM HA email below. Ok to send out?

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 4:15 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Message from Acting VOA Director

Hi (b) (6), is it okay to forward this to the "USAGM staff" email group via the house announcements mailbox?

Subject: Message from Acting VOA Director

Esteemed Colleagues,

Thanks to everyone for your continued dedication to the Voice of America during these challenging times. Your resilience in a time of constant change to work processes and your perseverance in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic are greatly appreciated.

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I wish you all a wonderful weekend.

Sincerely,

Elez

From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: Messaging - NPR 09.02.20 (7p.m.)
Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 7:45:04 PM
Attachments: [Messaging - NPR 09.02.20 \(7p.m.\).docx](#)

From: Sam Dewey
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 7:13 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Messaging - NPR 09.02.20 (7p.m.)

Updated.

PRIVILEGED AND CONFIDENTIAL
ATTORNEY WORK PRODUCT
ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATION
PRE-DECISIONAL/DELIBERATIVE

From: [Thad Strom](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: NPR Update
Date: Tuesday, October 6, 2020 10:35:04 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[final David Kligerman USAGM Written Statement.docx](#)

Fyi

Thad Strom
Senior Advisor
U.S. Agency for Global Media

w) (b) (6)

c) (b) (6)



From: Fernandez, Christopher (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, October 5, 2020 2:36 PM
To: Thad Strom (b) (6)
Subject: RE: NPR Update

Hi Thad,

Mr. Kligerman's testimony was submitted as an extraneous material following the conclusion of the hearing, so that's why we weren't able to locate it in the Repository.

I don't think they usually update the repository until all materials have been submitted and the transcript has been finalized within the allotted calendar days. But it turns out he did submit a written statement after all.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Chris

From: Thad Strom (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, October 05, 2020 12:31 PM
To: Fernandez, Christopher (b) (6)
Subject: RE: NPR

Thanks, most helpful. Confident the journalist got it wrong but it's funny how their mistakes are always in a light more favorable to their narrative ! Cheers

Thad Strom
Senior Advisor
U.S. Agency for Global Media

w) (b) (6)
c) (b) (6)



From: Fernandez, Christopher (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, October 5, 2020 12:22 PM
To: Thad Strom (b) (6)
Subject: RE: NPR

Hi Thad,

Thanks for flagging. Here's a PDF of the hearing.

Sometimes – I'm sure you know – Members will ask the Chair to submit statements for the record. I tried looking up "Kligerman" and "editorial independence" and found nothing related to a written statement from David Kligerman in the 9/24 testimony. He is mentioned twice though.

I then searched for Kligerman in the general HFAC Repository – and also got nothing. I'm emailing the Committee to see if they know any more information, but I doubt they'll get back to me. I'll keep looking - hope this helps.

Best,
Chris

From: Thad Strom (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, October 05, 2020 11:31 AM
To: Fernandez, Christopher (b) (6)
Subject: NPR

Chris, The language below is from an NPR news story that went out last night:

In recent written testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the suspended general counsel, David Kligerman, wrote that credible newsrooms must carry out investigations of journalistic standards themselves.

"It would be profoundly problematic for the political leadership of USAGM to carry out [such an]

investigation," Kligerman wrote. "Their carrying out of the investigation would undermine the very credibility of the organization, and its editorial independence, and raise questions about political influence."

It's curious to me because Kligerman didn't testify at your hearing on Sep't 24. I thought perhaps the journalist confused names of witnesses but none of the other witnesses said what was attributed to Kligerman. Do you know if Kligerman submitted a written statement? I don't see anything on the Comm's website. Thanks,

Thad Strom
Senior Advisor
U.S. Agency for Global Media

w) (b) (6)

c) (b) (6)



From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [CEO2016](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
Subject: FW: ON FRAME.IO: Interview to White House Official Re: Situation at VOA
Date: Friday, August 28, 2020 11:11:00 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
Importance: High

From: Michael Lipin (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, August 28, 2020 11:03 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: ON FRAME.IO: Interview to White House Official Re: Situation at VOA

FYI

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: (b) (6) >
Date: August 28, 2020 at 10:53:21 AM EDT
To: (b) (6)
Washington News Group (b) (6)
Subject: ON FRAME.IO: Interview to White House Official Re: Situation at VOA

Good morning,

I uploaded to frame.io my interview to Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Western Hemisphere Affairs in the White House National Security Council, Mauricio Claver-Carone. We talked about the White House new strategy to Latin America and the Caribbean but also about **the situation VOA foreign-born journalists are facing with the USAGM inaction to renew their J-1 visas**. Please see below a translation of the two questions and answers referring VOA. The interview can be found on **[VOA] VIDEO SHARE>MAURICIO CLAVER-CARONE**. Thank you.

TC 7:16

-Question: Within the frame of this strategy for the region, to show where the US stands in Latin American and Caribbean matters, one of the key organizations to ensure press freedom in this region is the Voice of America. At this moment, USAGM CEO, which is the agency that oversees VOA has blocked the visa extension of many foreign journalists, which is preventing VOA to carry out its mission in the region and, specially, in Venezuela. Is the White House aware of this situation and, if so, is it willing to act?
-Answer: Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and the border closure and travel restrictions, etc., there have been many consequences in many places. It has also

affected the Voice of America, which has had a key role in Venezuelan matters. I frankly congratulate you for the duty that you all have carried out. We are watching this situation and I hope it gets resolved as soon as possible.

-Question: Is the White House willing to put some pressure along with the Department of State so that Mr. Michael Pack authorizes these visa extensions, since now the journalistic duty of this group of professionals is being suppressed with no reason provided and with a case-by-case review that has seen no evolution and has not been explained?

-Answer: We value the journalistic duty that you and all VOA journalists do and we will have that conversation.

Link: <https://app.frame.io/player/1b62b3a0-95ea-4e73-869b-12968e60f28c>

Best,

(b) (6)

Voice of America (VOA) - Spanish TV Service

Cell: (b) (6)

330 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20237

(b) (6) | www.voanoticias.com



From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Sam Dewey](#)
Subject: FW: ON FRAME.IO: Interview to White House Official Re: Situation at VOA
Date: Friday, August 28, 2020 11:12:00 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

From: Michael Lipin (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, August 28, 2020 11:03 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: ON FRAME.IO: Interview to White House Official Re: Situation at VOA

FYI

Sent from my iPhone

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Best,

(b) (6)

Voice of America (VOA) - Spanish TV Service

Cell: (b) (6)

330 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20237

(b) (6)

| www.voanoticias.com



From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Diane Cullo](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
Subject: FW: One additional deadline question
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 12:14:00 PM

From: David Folkenflik (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 12:12 PM
To: Michael Pack (b) (6)
Cc: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: One additional deadline question

Mr. Pack -

I know the agency announced earlier this summer it was undertaking a visa-by-visa review of applications and renewals for J1s held by foreign nationals.

How many have you approved?

Thank you

DBF

David Folkenflik
Media Correspondent
NPR NEWS
11 W 42nd St
19th Floor
New York NY 10036
o) (b) (6)
mobile) (b) (6)
e) (b) (6)
Twitter: (b) (6)

From: [Diane Cullo](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: OPM Letter on Suitability and Credentialing Determinations
Date: Thursday, July 23, 2020 12:01:01 PM
Attachments: [OPM Letter on Suitability and Credentialing Determinations for USAGM.pdf](#)
[Atch 1 OPM SuitEA July 2020 Follow-up Report of USAGM Assessment.pdf](#)
[Atch 2 OPM 2019 Final Report of USAGM Assessment.pdf](#)
[Atch 3 OPM 2017 Final Report of USAGM Assessment.pdf](#)
[Atch 4 OPM 2012 Letter to BBG.pdf](#)
Importance: High

From: Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 5:15 PM
To: CEO2016 (b) (6)
Cc: Diane Cullo (b) (6); Morvared Namdarkhan (b) (6)
Subject: FW: OPM Letter on Suitability and Credentialing Determinations
Importance: High

From: OPMExecSec (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 1:37 PM
To: Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6)
Subject: OPM Letter on Suitability and Credentialing Determinations

Good afternoon,

Please see the attached letter from OPM Acting Director Michael Rigas for Director Pack. If USAGM has any questions, Lisa Loss, OPM's Director of Suitability Executive Agent Programs, can be reached at (b) (6). Thank you.

(b) (6)
Deputy Executive Secretary, Office of the Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Diane Cullo](#); [Thad Strom](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Subject: FW: Re OTF / Epoch Times: US Agency for Global Media Reopens Office of Internet Freedom
Date: Friday, October 2, 2020 3:43:00 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

FYSA – I responded and also sent over the OTF myth-busting sheet. They already have the other articles about OTF (Robbins, Crabtree, etc.).

From: Bonnaure, Aaron (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, October 2, 2020 3:03 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); DOrazio, Mike (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Re OTF / Epoch Times: US Agency for Global Media Reopens Office of Internet Freedom

Just a heads up. We are doing a call with HFAC staff next week to hear their side of this story. Depending on how that goes, there could potentially be interest from our office to work with you on an op-ed rebutting the op-ed in the National Review this week. We will be in touch next week.

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2020 10:32 AM
To: Bonnaure, Aaron (b) (6); DOrazio, Mike (b) (6)
Subject: Re OTF / Epoch Times: US Agency for Global Media Reopens Office of Internet Freedom

EPOCH TIMES

POLITICS

US Agency for Global Media Reopens Office of Internet Freedom

BY [BONNIE EVANS](#)

September 23, 2020 Updated: September 23, 2020

News Analysis

The U.S. Agency for Global Media ([USAGM](#)), which oversees U.S. government broadcasters such as Voice of America and Radio Free Asia, reopened its Office of Internet Freedom (OIF) last month.

OIF, which began operations in 2016, had been closed by leadership prior to

the June 4 confirmation of current USAGM Chief Executive Michael Pack.

“There is a critical need to support technologies that allow individuals to securely access and share information online,” the agency said in an [Aug. 18 statement](#).

OIF’s mission is to support the testing, deployment, and management of technologies that circumvent internet blocking, filtering, and other censorship techniques principally used by repressive regimes, such as China and Iran, the agency said in the release.

“Unlike prior USAGM leadership, which sidelined OIF, I consider bolstering internet firewall circumvention to be a top priority,” Pack said. “Blocking access to information is a horrible thing. ... That’s why we’re funding a range of internet firewall circumvention tools.”

With the announcement that OIF is back in business, Pack is moving to reestablish control over USAGM’s circumvention efforts, which had been challenged by a previous attempt to establish a shop called the Open Technology Fund (OTF) independent of USAGM control.

At least one issue central to the conflict within USAGM is a debate over whether to use open-source or closed-source technology. As Pack has sought to regain control, the USAGM and a key staff member have come under attack.

Circumventing Censorship

Mechanisms that censor the internet are principally used in authoritarian countries such as China and Iran. Circumventing those mechanisms is a common goal of government agencies and nonprofit organizations that attempt to empower citizens in repressive regimes by opening up access to the internet, but the means for doing so are often hotly debated.

One major point of contention is the use of open-source versus closed-source software (often called “proprietary”).

OIF will begin its new existence by funding one of each type. Open-source Psiphon and Cisco’s closed-source proprietary ACI are the first beneficiaries of the revived OIF.

In exclusive remarks to The Epoch Times, Katrina Lantos Swett, a noted human rights expert and president of the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice, said that “the Lantos Foundation advocates for all classes of internet freedom tools to be funded, including circumvention tools.

“Freagate and Ultrasurf are both large-scale circumvention tools that have received U.S. government funds in the past, and we would be happy to see future awards go to field-tested technologies like these that have undergone rigorous security vetting,” she said.

“We also believe all internet freedom technologies that receive funding should be thoroughly evaluated on an ongoing basis, to ensure that funds are being spent on the most effective tools available,” Lantos Swett said.

USAGM also includes under its funding and supervisory umbrella an entity called the Open Technology Fund (OTF). It, like OIF, has been in the business of supporting internet firewall circumnavigation tools.

OTF, however, has been firmly in the camp of using open-source solutions exclusively since its inception as a program within Radio Free Asia (RFA).

Going Rogue

OTF’s adamant exclusion of any internet freedom tools that are closed-source may have been one of the reasons that leadership of the program seemed to go rogue last year.

In September 2019, U.S. records show that Libby Liu, at that time the head of RFA and the OTF program, incorporated Open Technology Fund as a domestic nonprofit corporation under her own name.

Liu is listed as “incorporator” under the “beneficial owners” listing of the corporation’s registration file.

Senior officials at USAGM maintain that Liu had no authorization from either the agency or from any government organization to spin OTF off into its own entity. OTF receives its entire budget from USAGM.

In addition, OTF vacated its affordable office space at USAGM headquarters and moved to an expensive office district in downtown Washington on a taxpayer-funded lease, according to senior officials at USAGM.

In addition, according to officials, OTF didn’t leave a forwarding address. Officials at the USAGM say they had to search for the new offices themselves.

When Pack took office just over nine months later, he fired the heads of the USAGM networks and the OTF, including Liu and some board members.

Now, a lawsuit seeks to invalidate those firings, and to unfreeze grant money, which dismissed officials claim is being withheld.

Senior officials at USAGM dispute the lawsuit’s claims that Pack didn’t have the authority to fire network directors and Liu at OTF. In addition, senior USAGM officials say that money isn’t being withheld from the OTF, stating that it is being paid on a revised schedule.

Open-Source Versus Closed-Source Software

Some experts differ with OTF’s dogmatic rejection of closed-source

circumvention technologies.

CoreDNA, a Australian company that provides a unified cloud platform for digital businesses, according to its website, states that “open source software is available for the general public to use and modify from its original design free of charge.”

“What it means is that a piece of software can evolve and be iterated upon by other developers anywhere in the world.”

Therefore, CoreDNA’s blog on the subject continues, open-source software “should also come with a warning label.”

“Whilst an open and peer-to-peer-oriented web is to be applauded philosophically, it can leave us vulnerable to rogue developers who choose to break things for their own benefit. Hence, the need for a warning label.”

Closed-source software doesn’t need that warning label.

The source code of closed-source software “is not shared with the public for anyone to look at or change,” the company states.

‘Next Frontier of Human Rights’

“Internet freedom is the next frontier of human rights,” Lantos Swett also told The Epoch Times. She’s also a former chair and vice-chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, and teaches human rights and American foreign policy at Tufts University.

She says there are “a few clear goals” that the foundation she leads strives to achieve.

“Open the internet to those in closed societies. Provide funding and tools to empower people to see beyond the censored views of their own totalitarian

governments. Give them the freedom to learn, to organize, and to thrive the same way we do in open societies.”

Unlike OTF and its supporters, however, Lantos Swett said that “we are proponents of internet freedom in all its forms.”

“This encompasses both open and closed source technologies.”

The key is to have “a large and flexible toolbox of technologies and approaches” that not only protect a user’s privacy, including those under repressive surveillance, but that also, and critically, “currently circumvent firewalls for millions of users in closed societies.”

It’s funding for those circumvention tools that’s concerned Lantos Swett for years.

“Circumvention tools offer one of the most effective ways to bring down, for example, the Great Firewall of China,” she said.

“At the very least,” Lantos Swett said, those tools can “punch large holes” into China’s infamous digital barricade.

Despite their effectiveness, however, recent years have seen “a trend of reduced funding,” and in some cases a “complete lack of funding” for large-scale circumvention tools.

“We don’t view funding for internet freedom as an either-or scenario, where we have to fund only open-source or exclusively circumvention tools. But we feel strongly that the latter should receive adequate funding to ensure that there is enough capacity to meet the demand coming from closed societies.”

“We also support the continuing development of new technologies,” she said.

Lantos Swett also weighed in on the controversy between USAGM and its erstwhile spinoff, the OTF.

In The Hill in May, Lantos Swett wrote, “It is folly to think that the 2019 re-establishment of OTF as an independent nonprofit and the sole grantee of the USAGM’s internet freedom funds will lead to any meaningful change.”

“We have been advocating since 2009 to re-direct a portion of the U.S. government’s internet freedom funds” to what is now the USAGM.

Since then, despite potential breakthroughs, “we have equally often been disappointed when we have seen obfuscation, misdirection, and at times even blatant discrimination vis-à-vis decisions about funding.”

Despite “ongoing dialogue” with the former leadership of both USAGM and the OTF that Liu headed, “we have generally witnessed a lack of follow-through in support for some of the most effective circumvention tools currently available.”

“When OTF was re-established as a nonprofit in late 2019 under the same leadership, we had little confidence that we would see meaningful change and this fear was borne out.”

Lantos Swett is “cautiously optimistic”, however, that the changes at USAGM may result in “increased funding for circumvention tools, alongside continued funding for other types of internet freedom tools.”

“We welcome a move in this direction, but given what we have witnessed in the past, we’re going to reserve our judgment until we actually see what action the leadership at USAGM takes.”

“Again, our goal is to open up the internet in closed societies. We look forward to working with anyone who shares this goal, and we’re supportive of pursuing the full range of tools and approaches that hold promise for

reaching it,” she said.

Attacks on USAGM

Since the firings, USAGM and one member of Pack’s staff, in particular, have come under attack on social media and in the press.

Mora Namdar, vice-president of legal compliance and risk at USAGM, has been a key focus of disparagement on Twitter.

One Twitter user, Nima Fatemi, [wrote](#):

“This is an absurd intimidation tactic being employed by Michael Pack and his disgrace of ‘acting VP for legal matters’; A new low standard for the US government. Big congrats to Mora Namdar for becoming a sock puppet for the fascists. #saveinternetfreedom”

The “tactic” to which Fatemi refers is likely the unscheduled visit Namdar made to OTF’s new office, once its location had been identified.

Fatemi is described as an “independent security researcher, focused on encryption, privacy and censorship circumvention technologies,” on the website [Dxfest.com](#).

Pack came to Namdar’s defense in a press release and on Twitter.

“The attempts of those with money and power to disparage her are transparent, weak, and without merit. I am lucky to have Ms. Namdar on my team,” Pack wrote.

“The campaign being waged by individuals who seem more concerned about covering up corruption and past failures than working on behalf of the American people should outrage every American citizen. In particular, the personal and false attacks launched against Mora Namdar and other

members of my staff working to advance freedom and human rights are totally without merit,” he wrote on Twitter on Aug. 21.

“One can only surmise that OTF’s desire to foment scandal is to distract from its numerous serious lapses and unwillingness to be transparent about its activities.”

Namdar is a lawyer, a daughter of immigrants who fled Iran after the 1979 revolution, and a recognized human rights activist.

Namdar told The Epoch Times that “all of the people who have attacked me have never met me.”

“I’m an ardent supporter of rooting out corruption.”

Namdar has been heartened, though, by some of the responses to social media slurs directed at her.

“On Twitter, people I don’t know have jumped on the bandwagon to defend me.”

Pack, a Trump appointee whose nomination languished in the Senate for more than two years, had already withstood one spate of fierce media criticism earlier in the summer from Democrats and some never-Trump Republicans as a tool-in-waiting of the president who would pursue a policy of selective speech in favor of the administration.

The predictions of interference from the White House into the journalistic process at networks such as Voice of America to date haven’t been realized.

In the meantime, on July 1, the Open Technology Fund posted a notice on its website titled “Pause in September Round.” The notice went on to say:

“Due to the current lack of clarity around the availability and timeline of the

remainder of our FY2020 funds, we have decided to postpone the opening of the upcoming rounds of the Internet Freedom Fund and the Core Infrastructure Fund and will not accept submissions.”

It goes on to tell readers, “We are always available for your questions – feel free to contact team members directly or get in touch via hello@opentech.fund.”

However, no one replied to a request for comment sent to that email address. In addition, an email sent to the email address for press inquiries that is listed on OTF’s website bounced back. No phone number for the organization is listed on the website. The LinkedIn listings for Liu and Laura Cunningham, the principal director of OTF under Liu, don’t include a messaging function.

From: [Kellie Boyle](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer
Date: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 5:24:03 PM
Attachments: [Re-earning Trust pdf.pdf](#)

Thank you!

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 3:46 PM
To: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

What do you think?

(b) (6)
Acting Director of Public Affairs
United States Agency for Global Media
Washington DC 20237
W: (b) (6)
M: (b) (6)
(b) (6)

From: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 4:41 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

I'm sorry that it's more work for you! Thank you very much.

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 4:38 PM
To: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

Ok. I guess I knew it wasn't going to press but I thought it still needed to be an email body.
So, let me put this into an InDesign file and send it back to you. It will make it a much better pdf to send.
Sorry for the misunderstanding.

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From: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 4:29:46 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

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Thanks,
Kellie

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 2:09 PM
To: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

It's attached here.

However, just to be clear, it won't be sent as an attachment...it will be in the body of the email. This was created in Constant Contact, which is how we distribute our press releases and other statements, etc. The pdf version is just what it would look like if someone were to print out their email....

(b) (6)
Acting Director of Public Affairs
United States Agency for Global Media
Washington DC 20237
W: (b) (6)
M: (b) (6)
(b) (6)

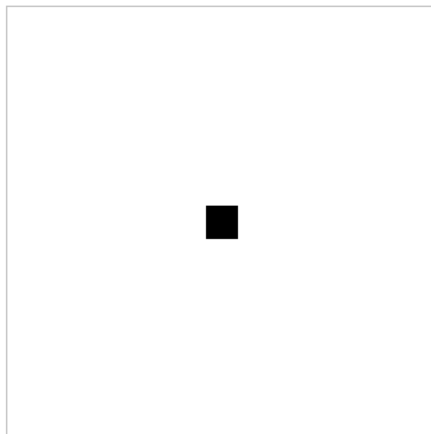
From: Kellie Boyle (b) (6) >
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 2:05 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

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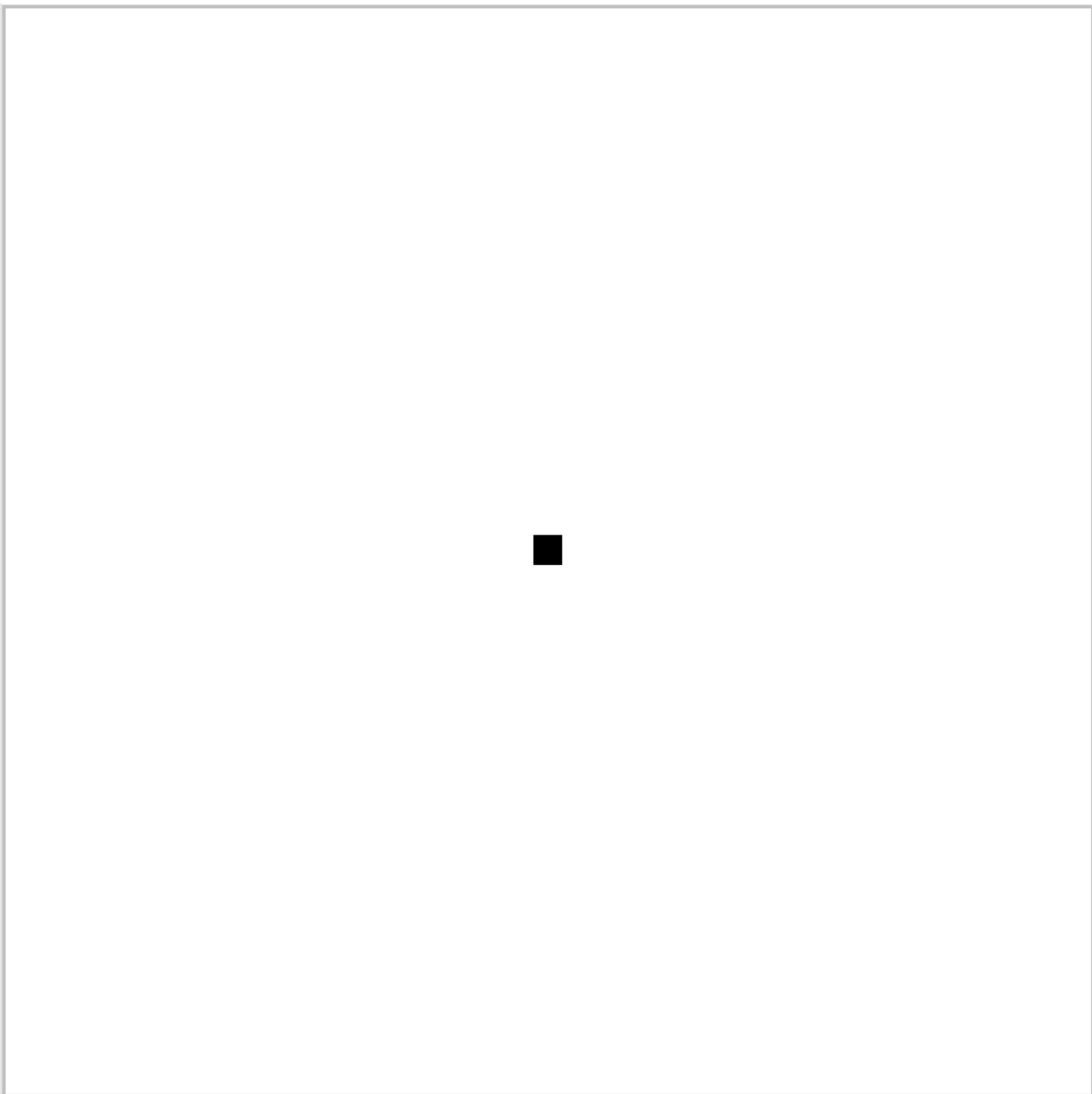
From: Laurie Moy (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 1:55 PM
To: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

With the new graphics...

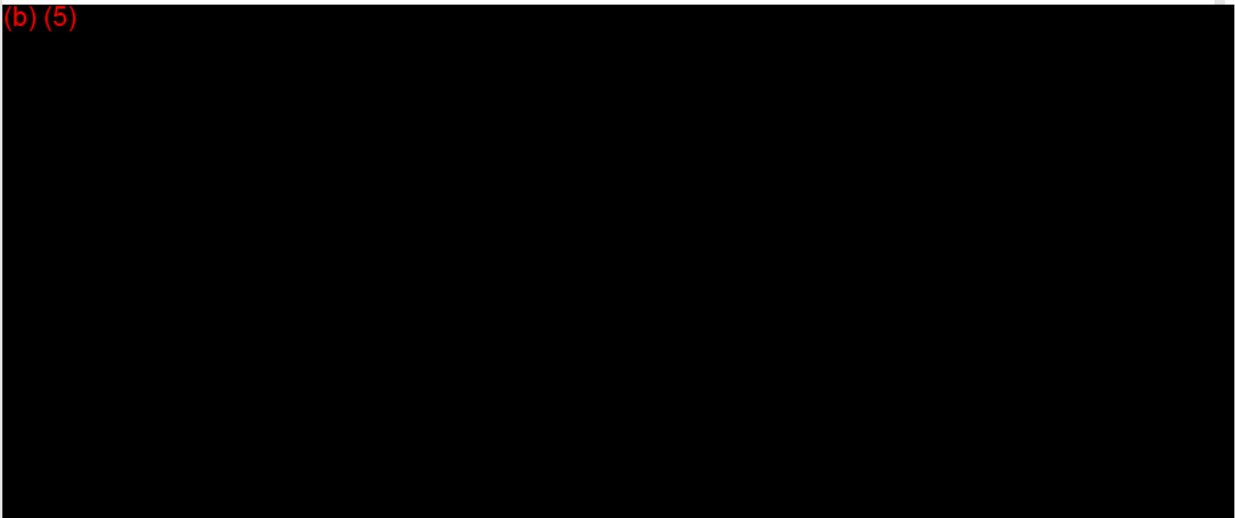
From: U.S. Agency for Global Media (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 1:54 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer



(b) (5)



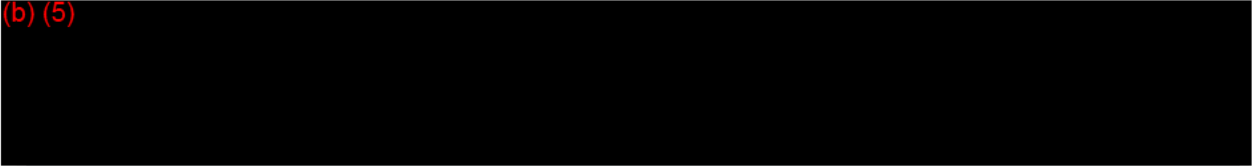
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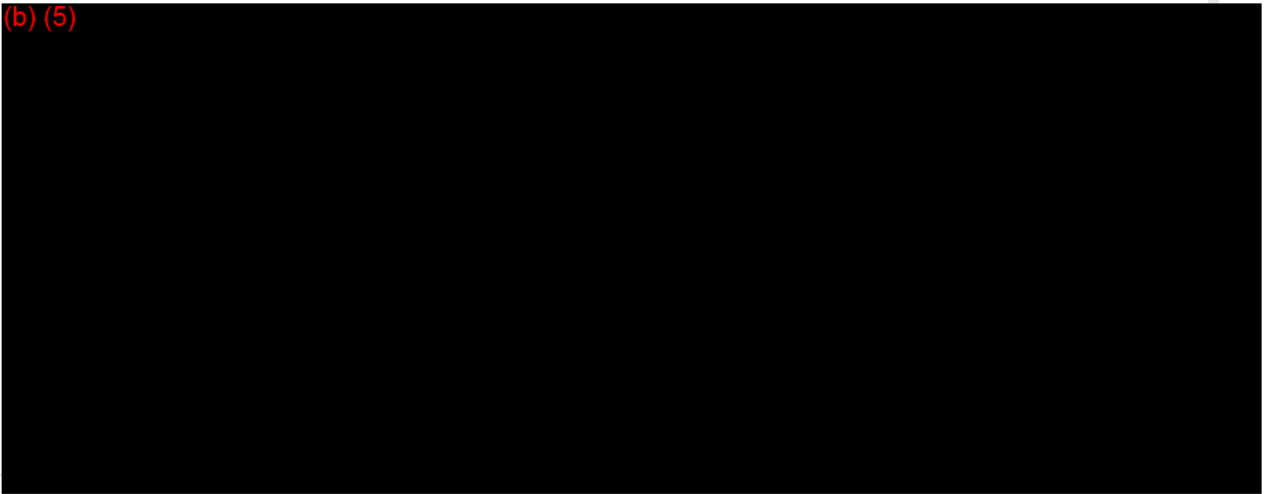


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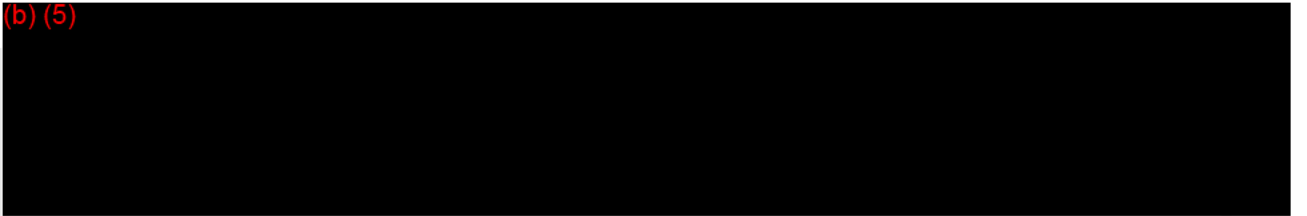
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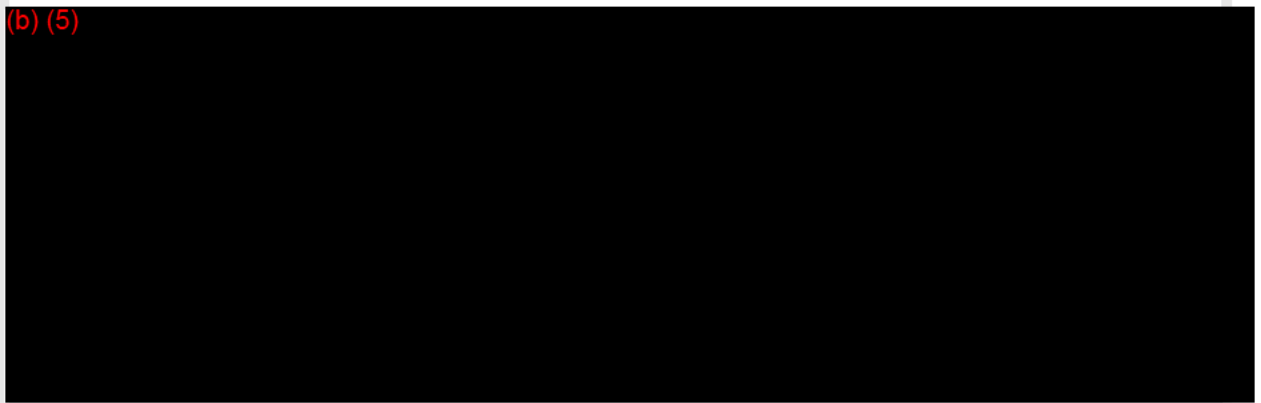
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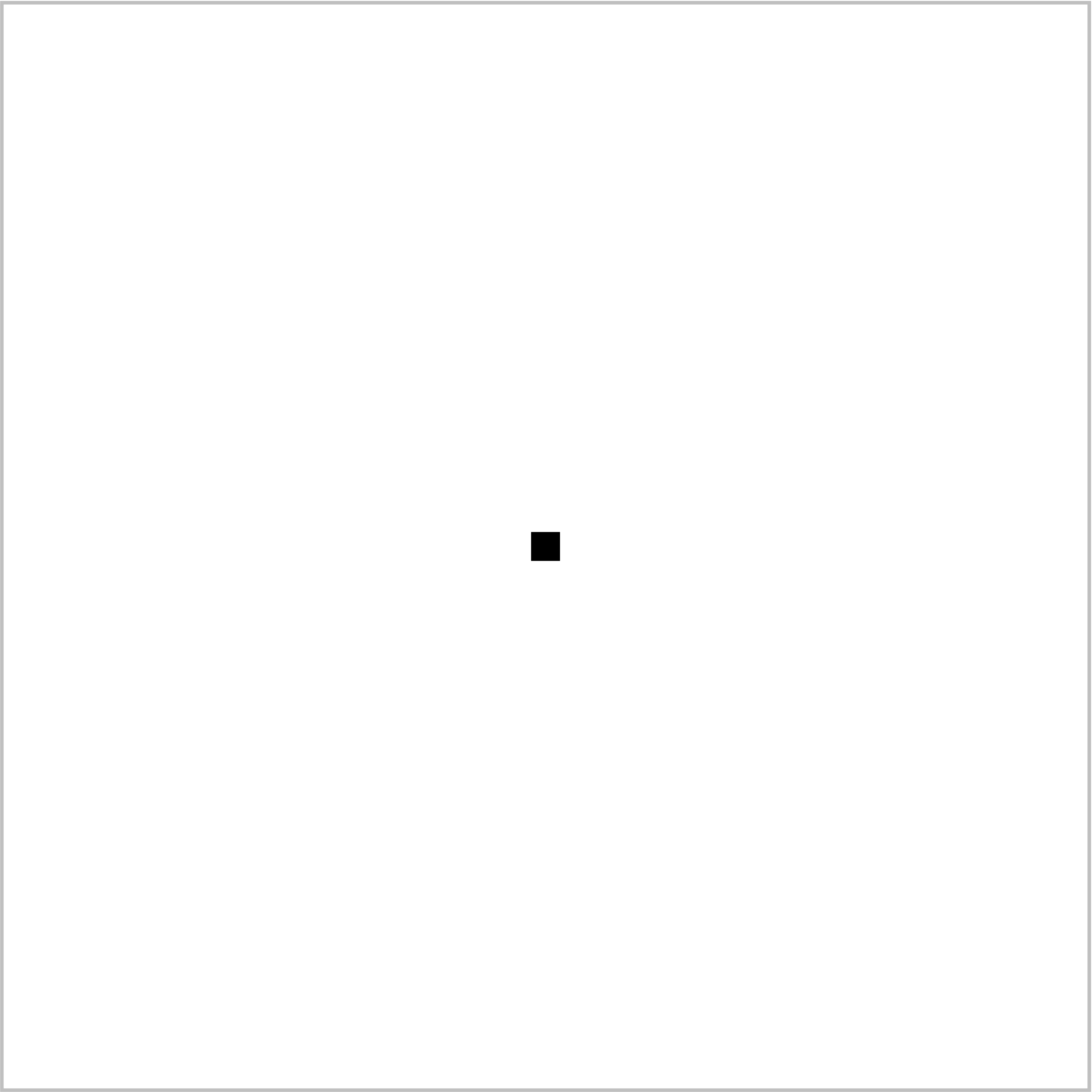


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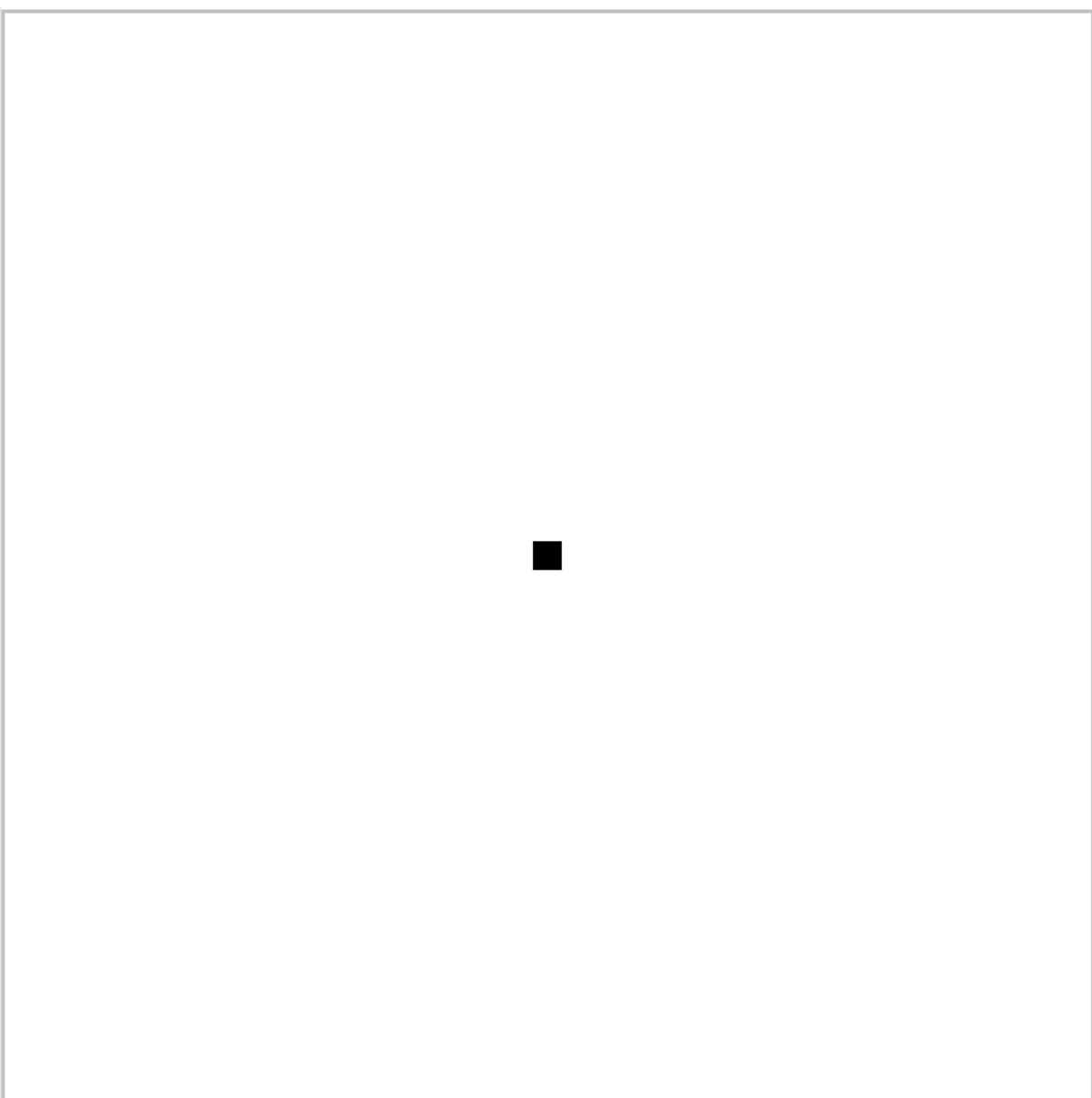
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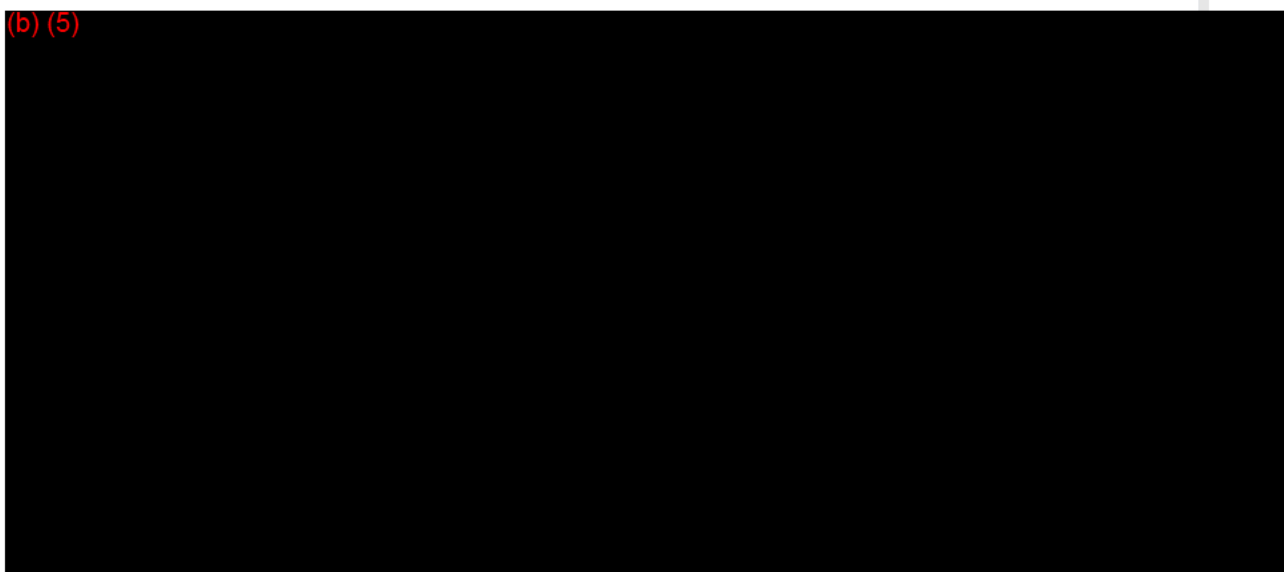


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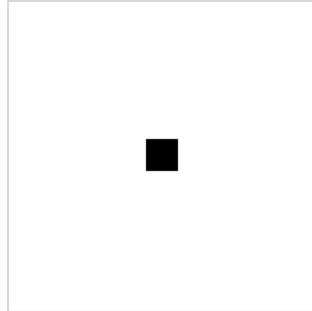


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From: [Kellie Boyle](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer
Date: Tuesday, January 5, 2021 4:15:34 PM
Attachments: [DRAFT Re-earning Trust Mobile vertical 01-05.mov](#)
[DRAFT Re-earning Taxpaery Trust 01-05 vertical.pdf](#)

Thoughts?

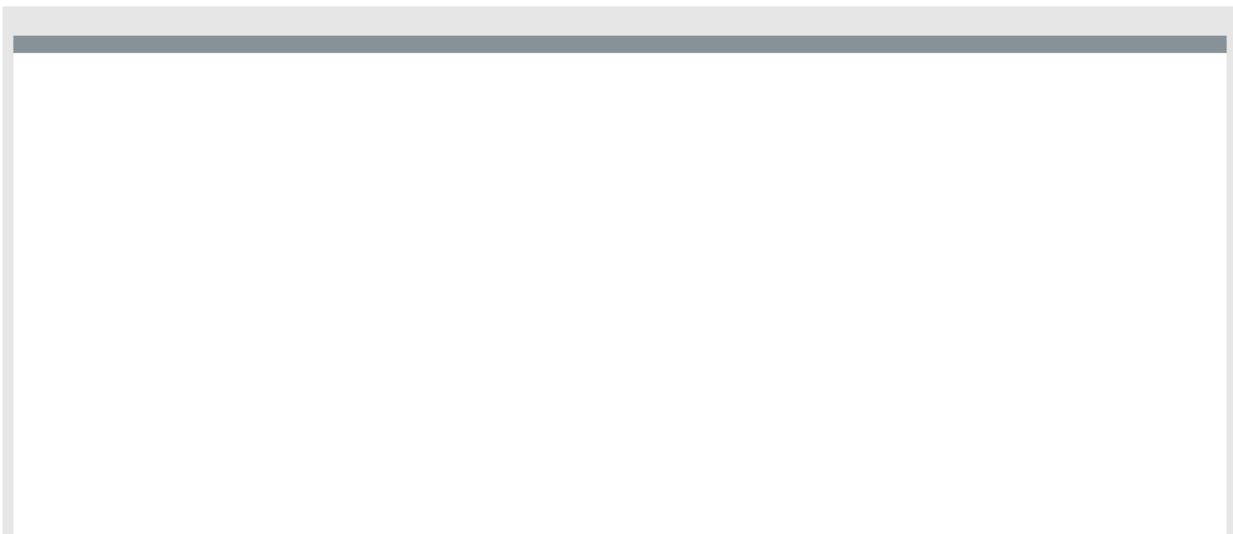
Thanks.

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, January 5, 2021 4:10 PM
To: Kellie Boyle (b) (6); Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

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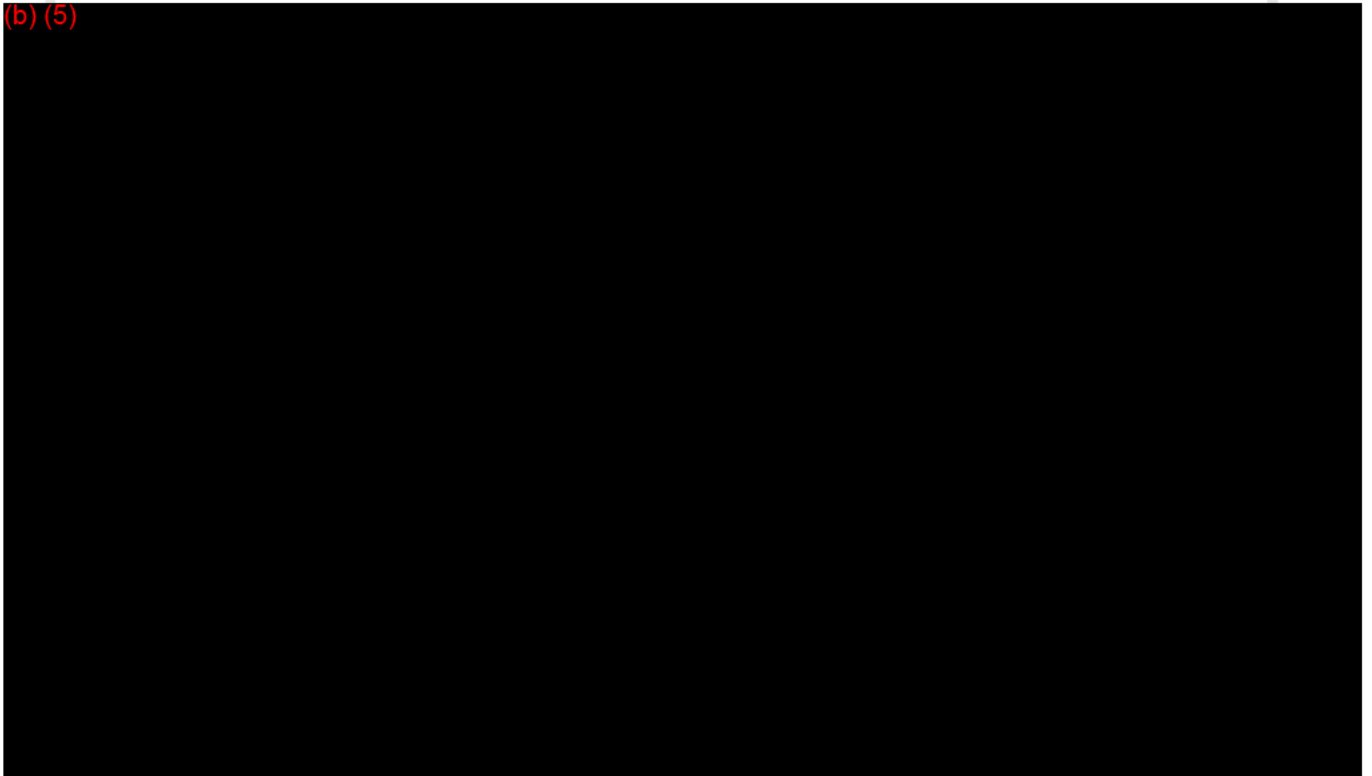
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Acting Director of Public Affairs
United States Agency for Global Media
Washington DC 20237
W: (b) (6)
M: (b) (6)
(b) (6)

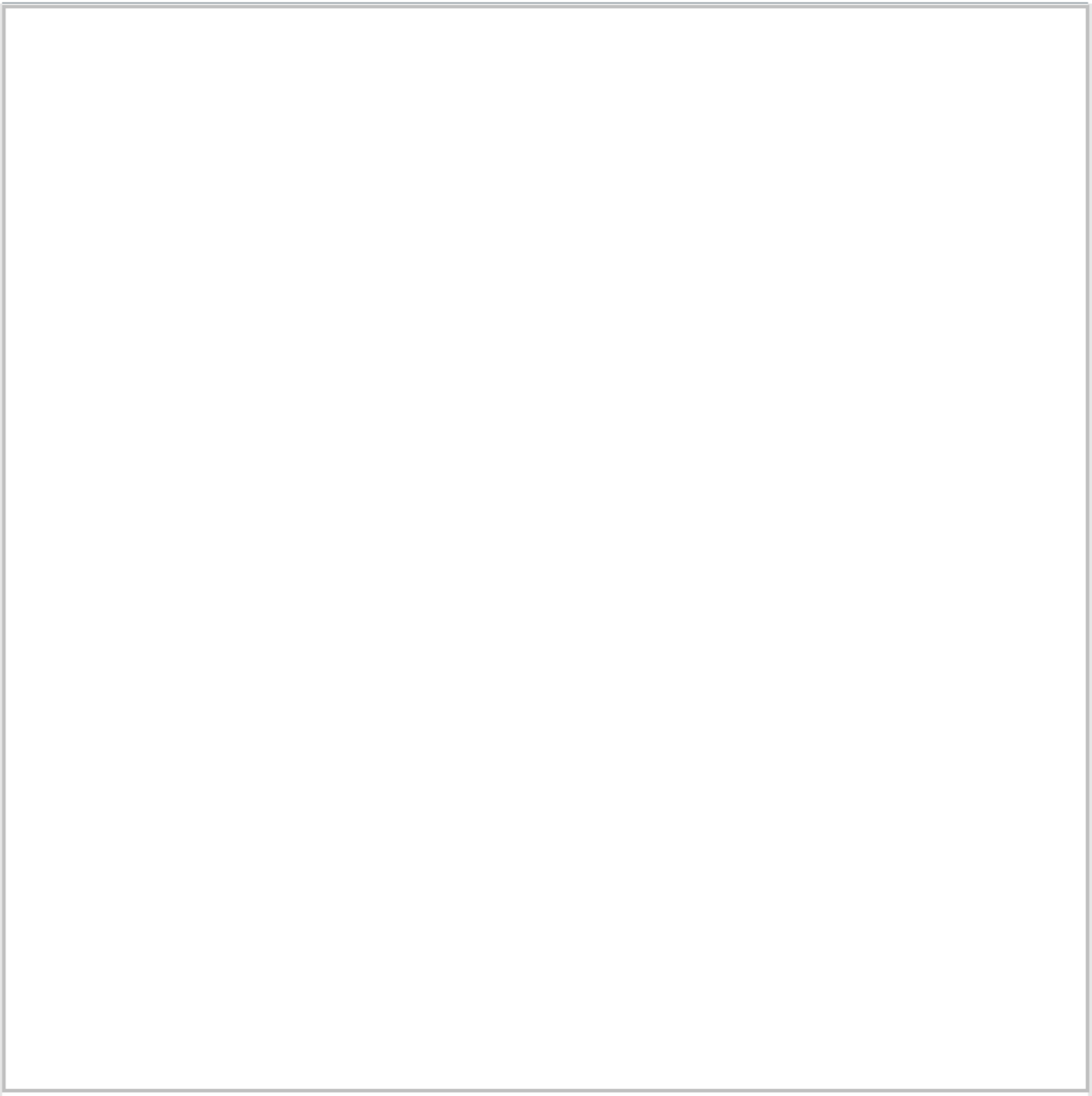
From: U.S. Agency for Global Media (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, January 5, 2021 4:05 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer





(b) (5)



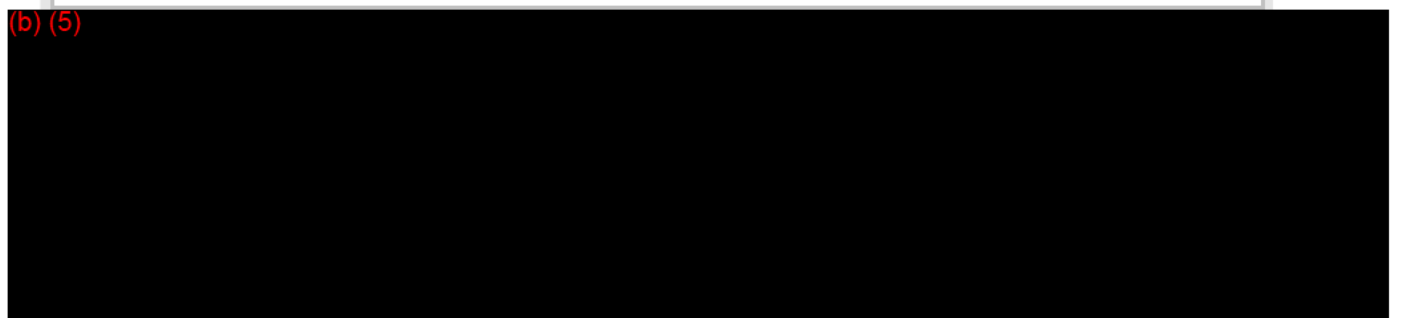


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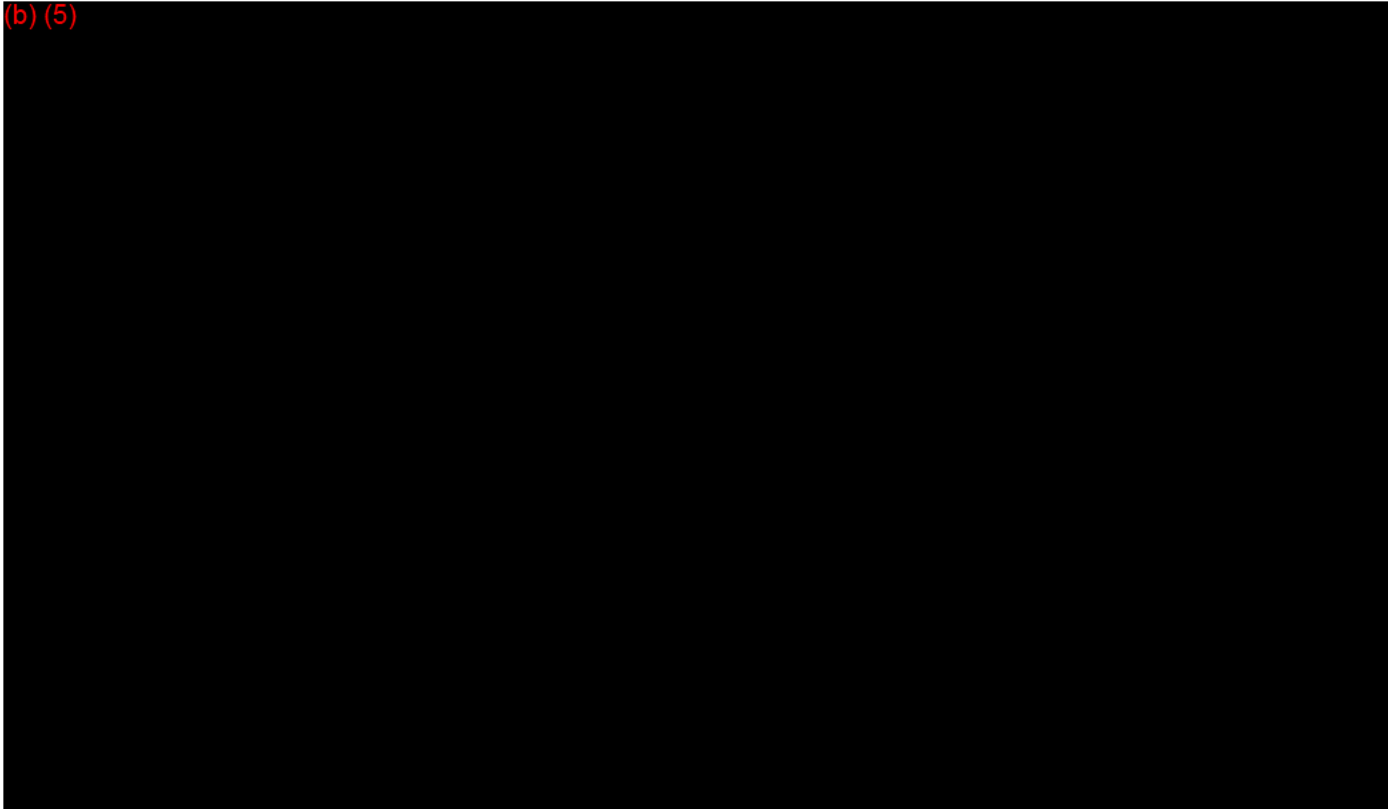
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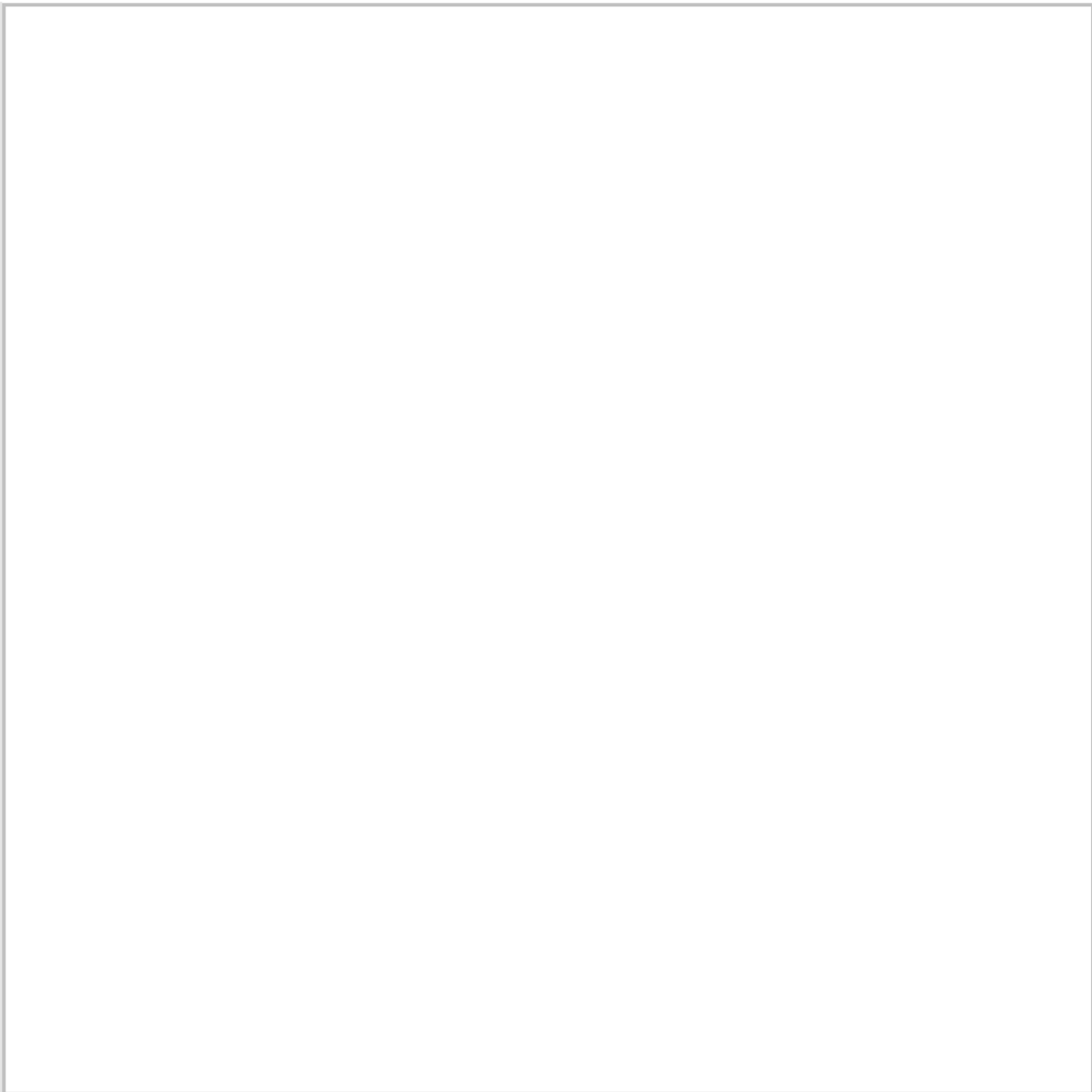


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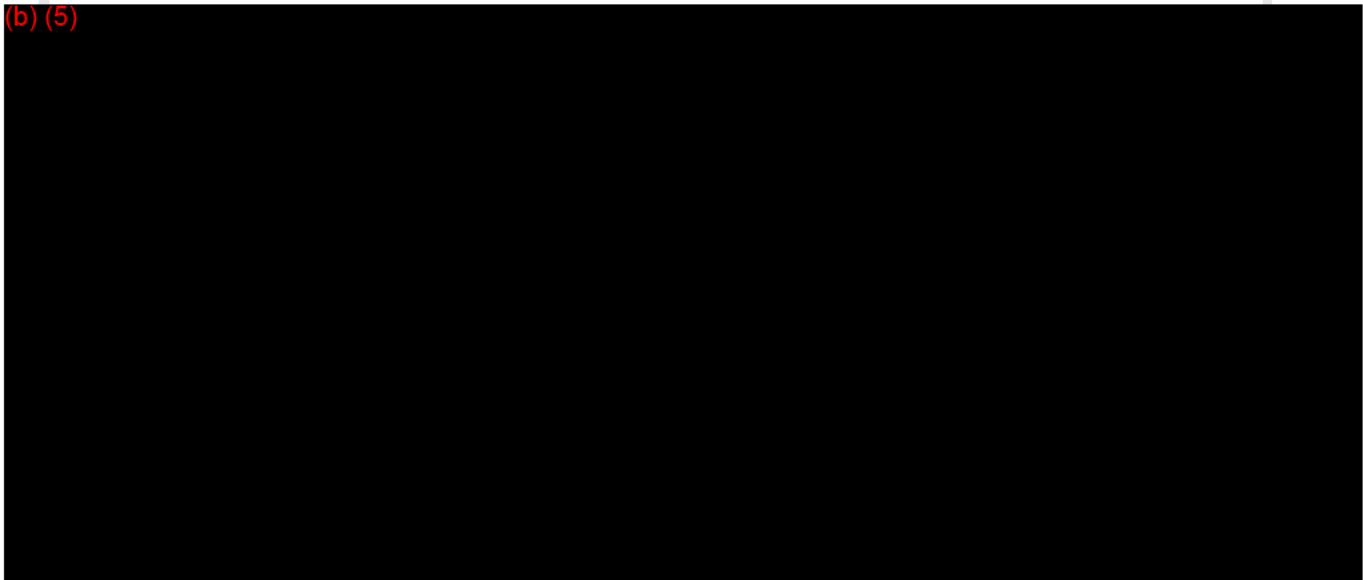


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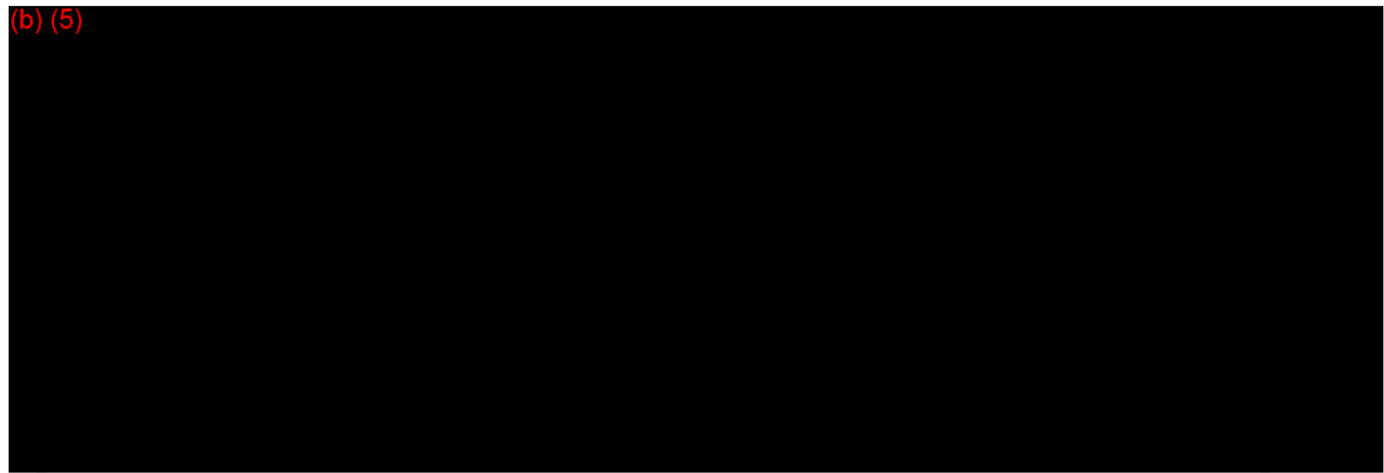




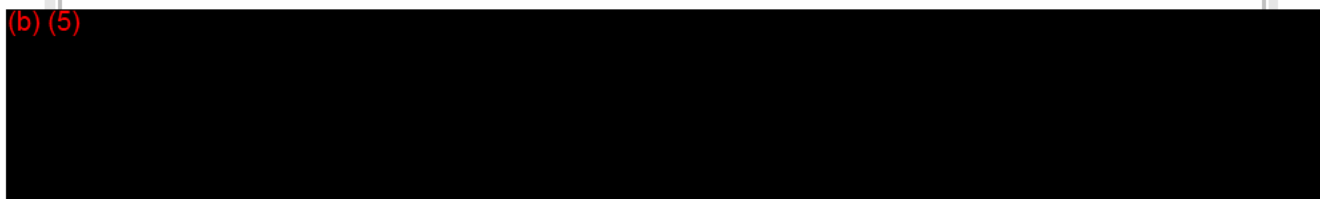
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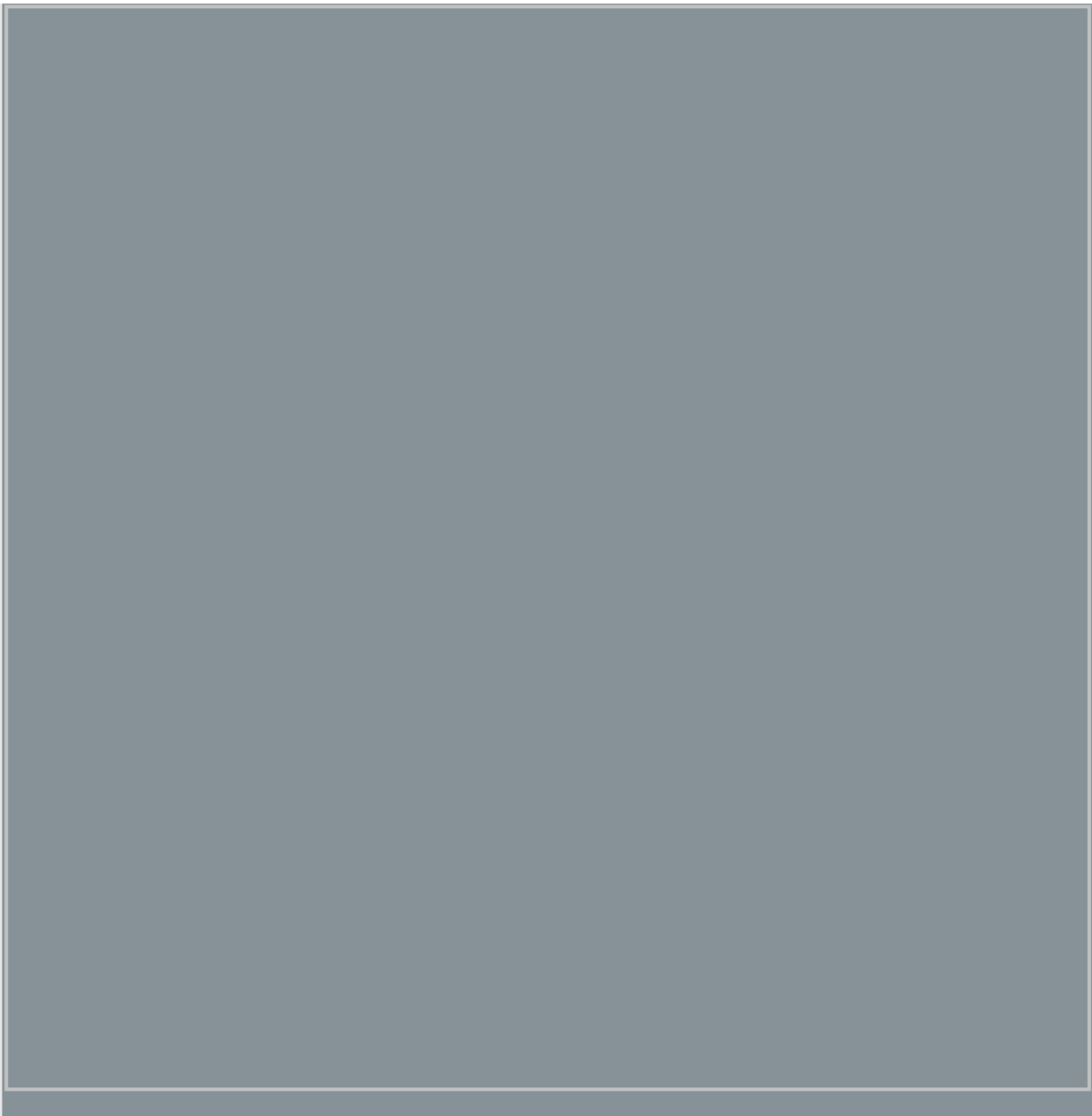


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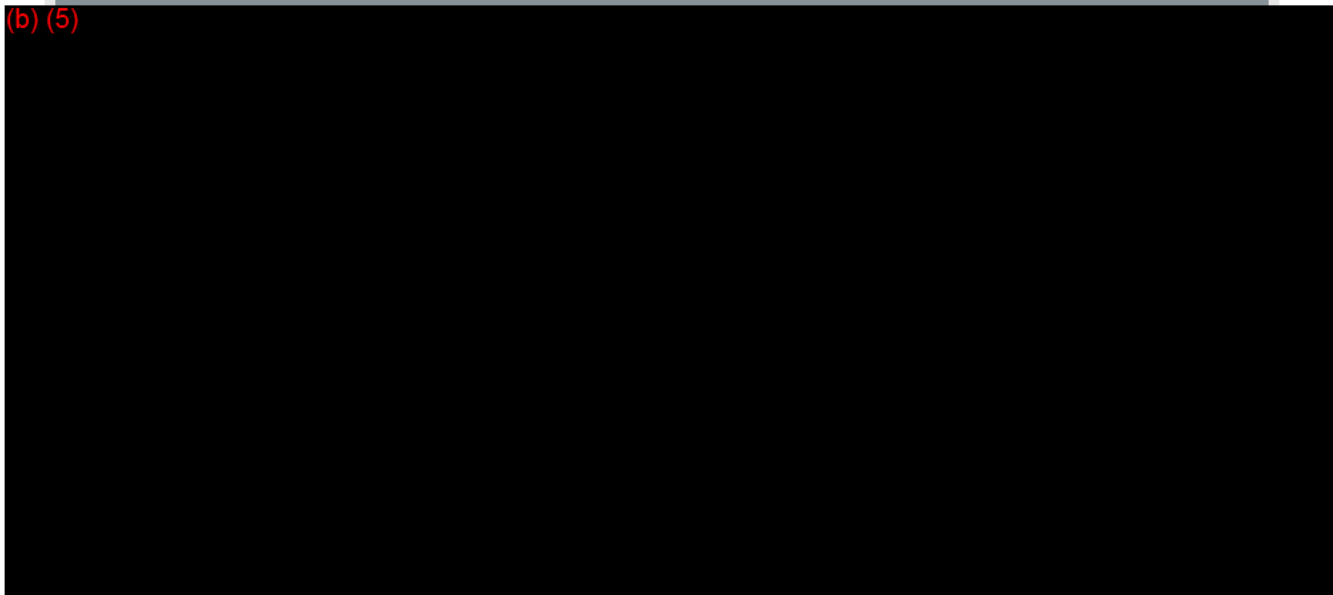


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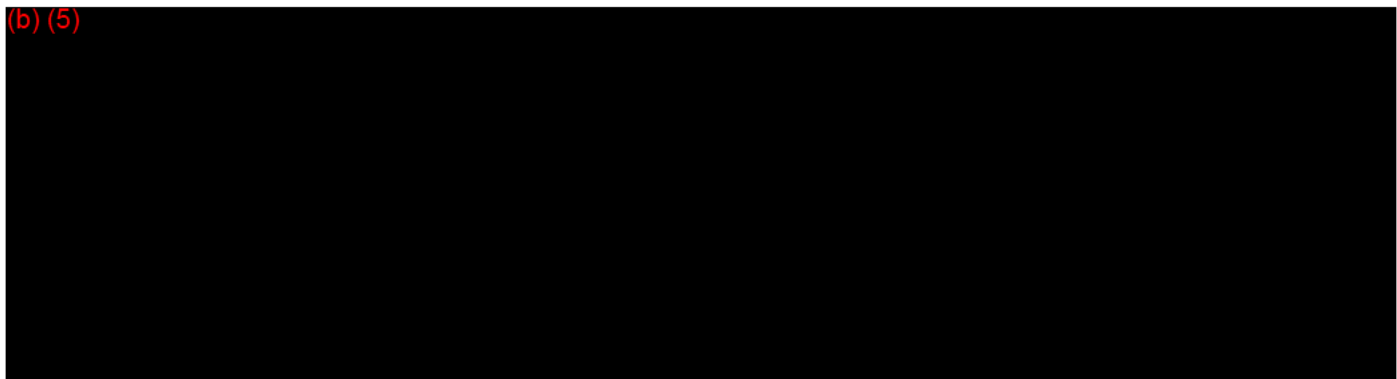




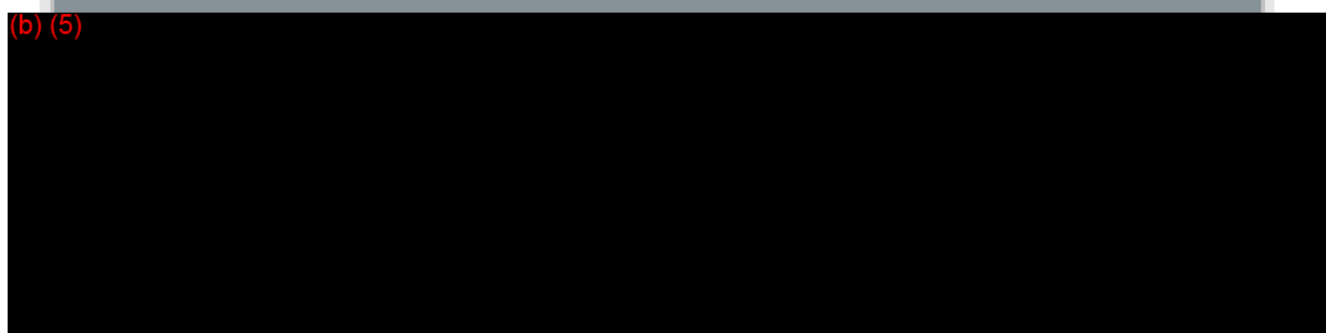
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(b) (5)



(b) (5)



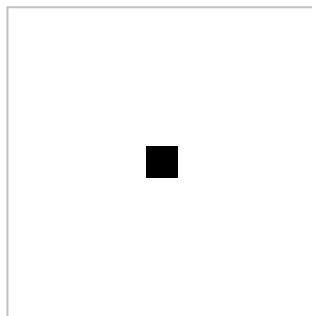
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From: [Kellie Boyle](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer
Date: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 11:29:27 AM
Attachments: (b) (5)

Sorry, I know you're swamped, but if you can please review this, I'd really appreciate it. Since Mora is gone and Sam is under water, we just need to make sure it's accurate. And feel free to remove anything that you think is too in-the-weeds.

Thank you very much!
Kellie

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 11:01 AM
To: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

Hmm...now?

(b) (6)
Acting Director of Public Affairs
United States Agency for Global Media
Washington DC 20237
W: (b) (6)
M: (b) (6)
(b) (6)

From: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 10:22 AM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

Sorry, no attachment.

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 9:14 AM
To: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

Sure, here you go.

(b) (6)
Acting Director of Public Affairs
United States Agency for Global Media

Washington DC 20237

W: (b) (6)

M: (b) (6)

(b) (6)

From: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)

Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 5:48 PM

To: (b) (6)

Subject: RE: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

This looks good – thank you. But I’m sorry, Jonathan asked if there’s a Word doc version so he can edit it. Don’t worry about the layout.

Thank you,
Kellie

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 3:46 PM

To: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)

Subject: Re: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

What do you think?

(b) (6)

Acting Director of Public Affairs
United States Agency for Global Media
Washington DC 20237

W: (b) (6)

M: (b) (6)

(b) (6)

From: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)

Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 4:41 PM

To: (b) (6)

Subject: RE: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

I’m sorry that it’s more work for you! Thank you very much.

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 4:38 PM

To: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)

Subject: Re: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

Ok. I guess I knew it wasn’t going to press but I thought it still needed to be an email body. So, let me put this into an InDesign file and send it back to you. It will make it a much better pdf

to send.
Sorry for the misunderstanding.

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From: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 4:29:46 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

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Thanks,
Kellie

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 2:09 PM
To: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

It's attached here.
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Acting Director of Public Affairs
United States Agency for Global Media
Washington DC 20237
W: (b) (6)
M: (b) (6)
(b) (6)

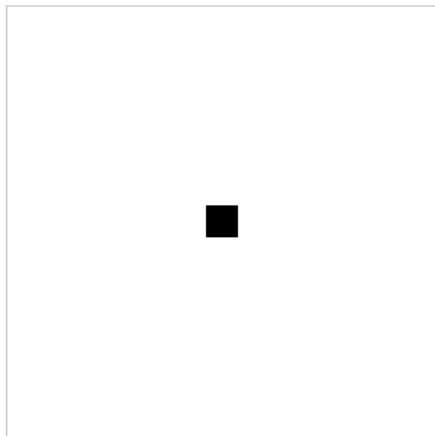
From: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 2:05 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

Could you please send this as a document? I'd like to see how it looks since that's how we'll be attaching it. (And I can do a quick edit from that.) thank you!

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 1:55 PM
To: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer

With the new graphics...

From: U.S. Agency for Global Media (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 1:54 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Re-Earning the Trust of the American Taxpayer



(b) (5)

A large, solid black rectangular redaction box that covers the majority of the page content below the placeholder image. The text "(b) (5)" is visible in the top-left corner of this redacted area.

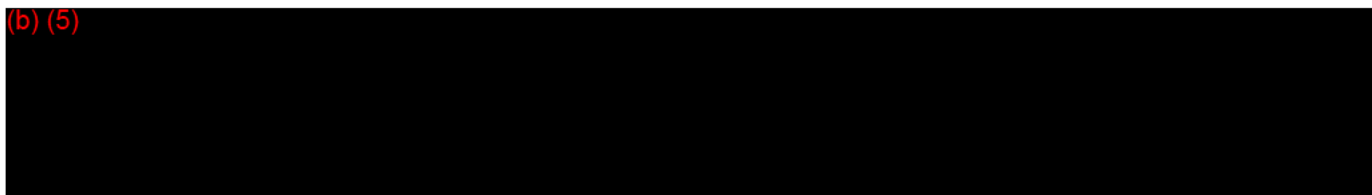


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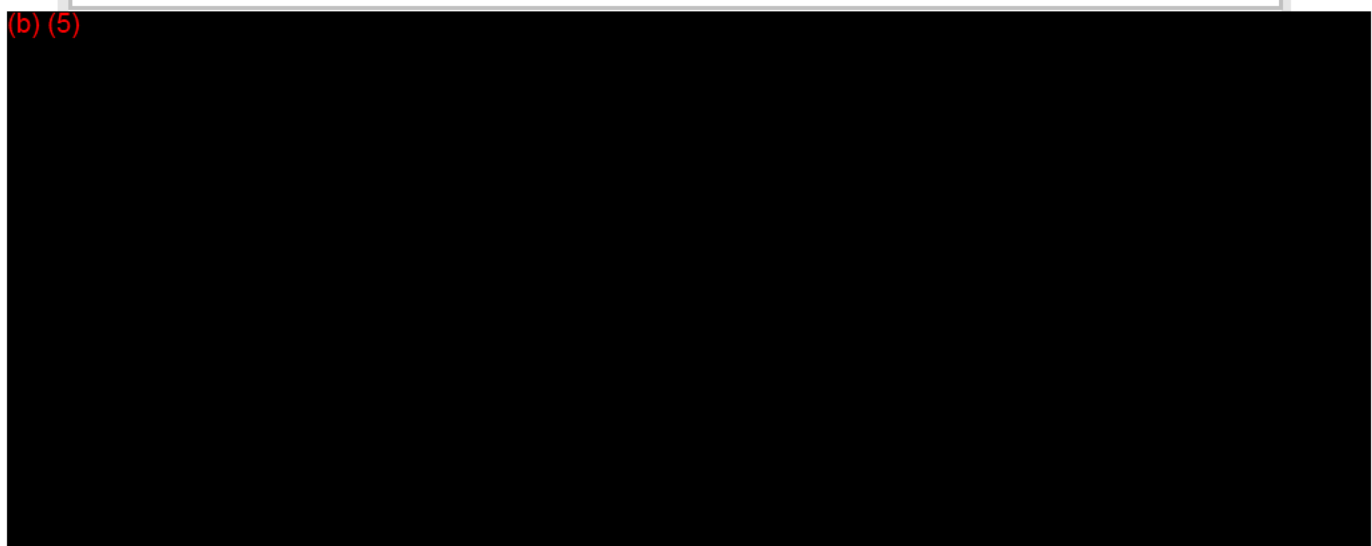


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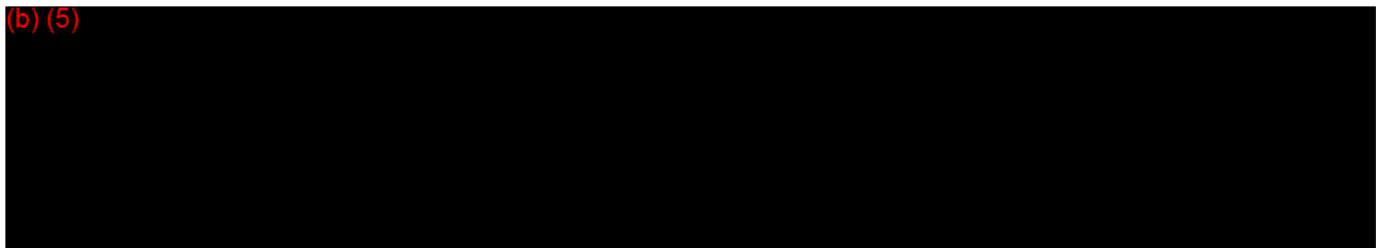
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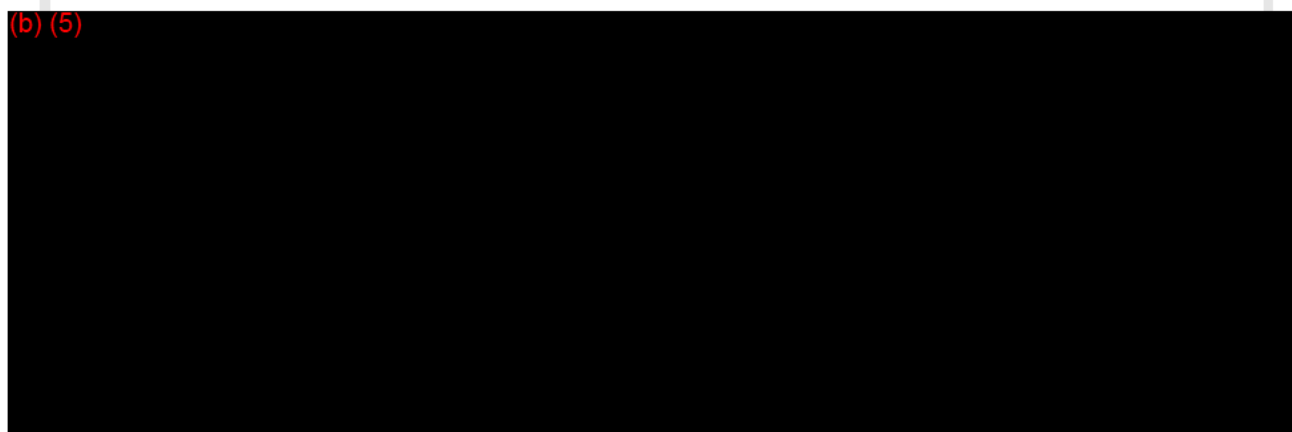
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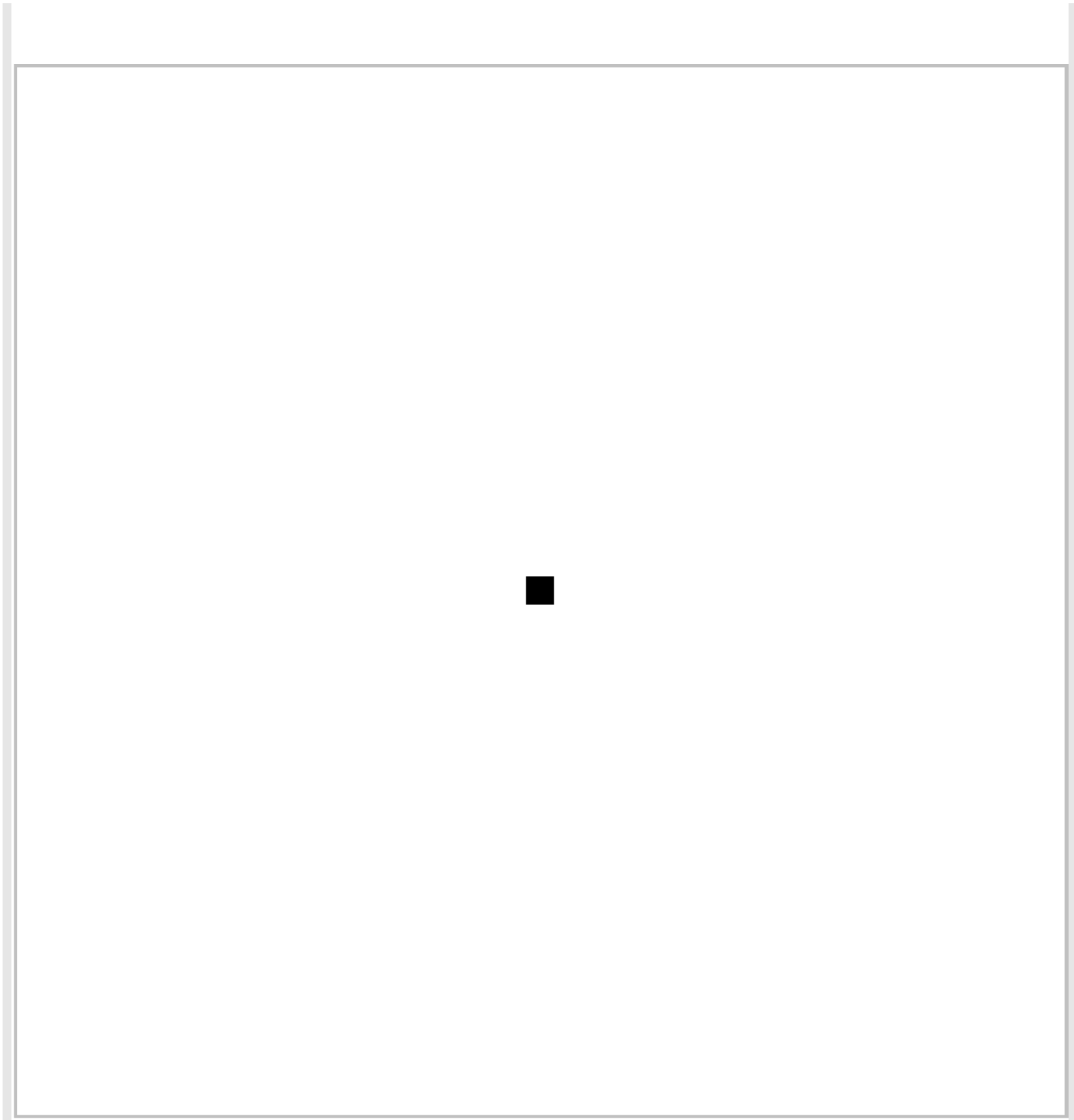


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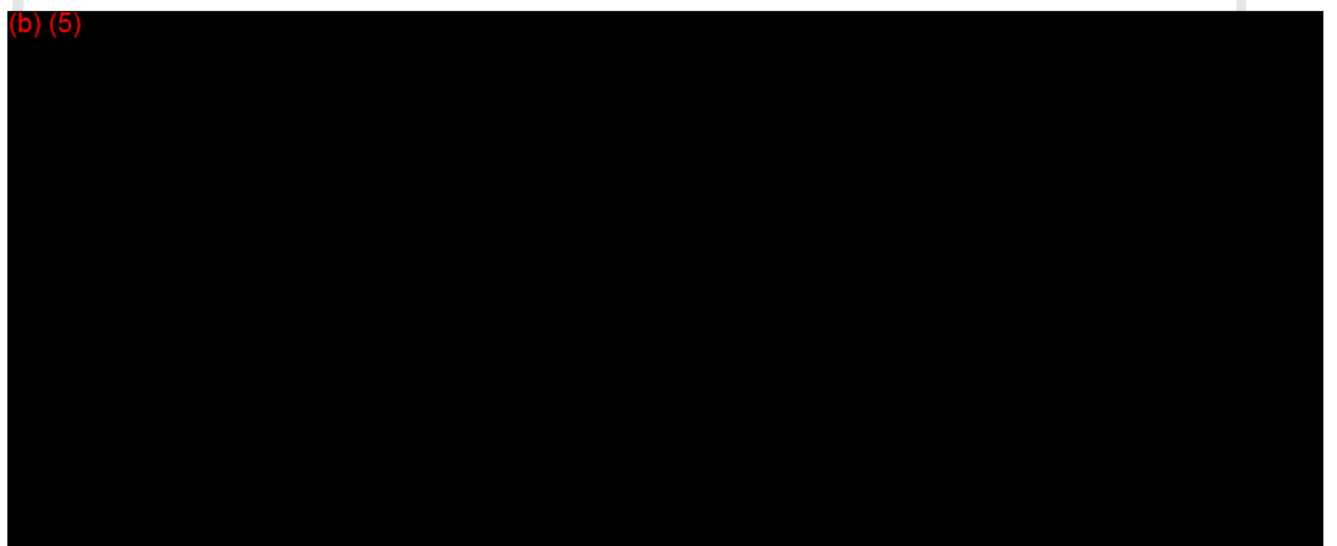


(b) (5)





(b) (5)





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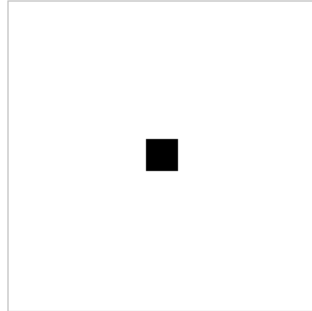


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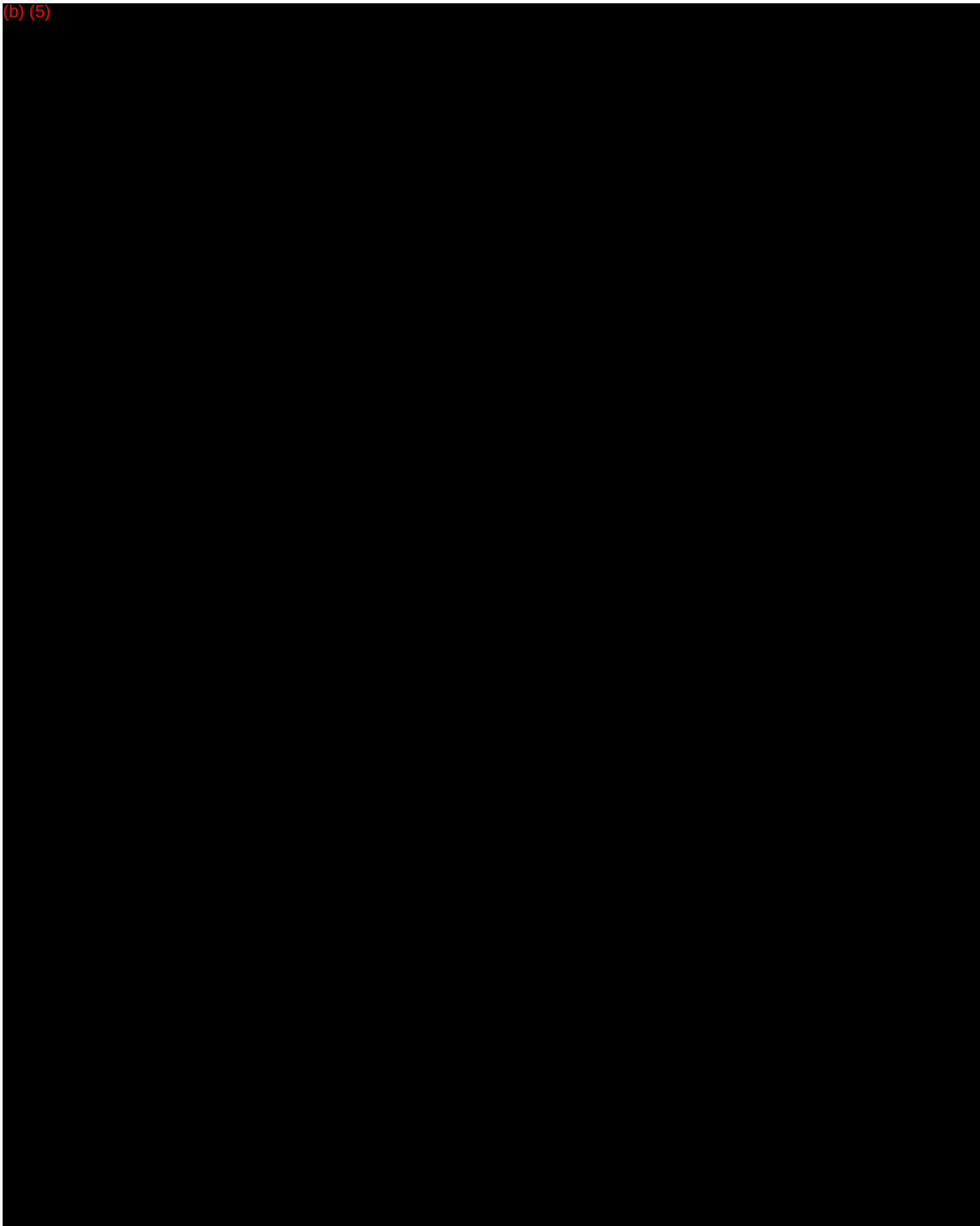


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(b) (5)



(b) (5)



From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Diane Cullo](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
Subject: FW: Request for Comment
Date: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 5:44:00 PM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 4:57 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: Request for Comment

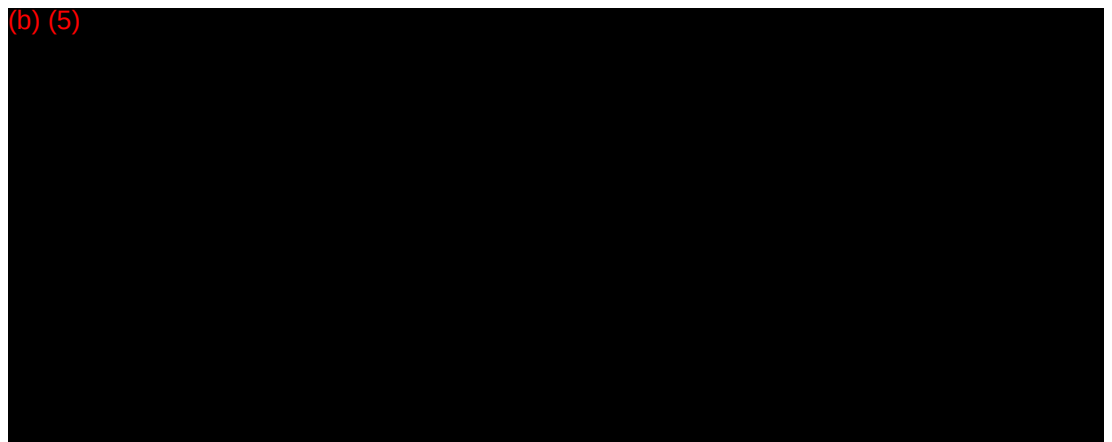
FYSA

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From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 4:51 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: Request for Comment

(b) (6),
This is all we are sending:

(b) (5)



From: Terrence Matsuo (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 2:21:39 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Public Relations (b) (6); Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Request for Comment

Dear (b) (6):

Thank you for passing along my request to the USAGM. I am grateful for your assistance.

On Tue, Jul 14, 2020 at 1:59 PM (b) (6) > wrote:

Hello,

Thank you for your email inquiry.

I am copying the USAGM Public Affairs Office, as they are the point of contact with regard to the status of USAGM's decisions on the J-1 visas for VOA journalists, so please communicate directly with them on those questions.

I will get back to you shortly about your VOA Korean related questions.

Regards,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Director of Public Relations
Voice of America

U.S. Agency for Global Media

(formerly Broadcasting Board of Governors)
330 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20237

(b) (6)

Direct
Main

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

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From: Terrence Matsuo (b) (6)

Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 1:56 PM

To: Public Relations (b) (6)

Subject: Request for Comment

To whom it may concern:

My name is Terrence Matsuo and I am the Washington correspondent for NK News, an agency focused on North Korea.

I am interested in recent reports about the decision to review visas for journalists at VOA. Are these reports accurate?

Why are these reviews taking place? USAGM CEO Michael Peck wrote in an op-ed for the New York Post that his agency "needs a turnaround badly, and I'm determined to deliver one." How does this review accomplish that?

Additionally, how many journalists in total work for the Korean services of VOA? Of those, how many journalists have visas that are being reviewed?

How will this decision affect VOA operations to broadcast news into North Korea?

I would appreciate your response.

Thank you very much.

--

Best,

Terrence Matsuo
Washington Correspondent
[NK News](#) – News and opinion
[Korea Risk Group](#) – Institutional services
[NK Pro](#) – Research tools, data and premium analysis
(b) (6)
m USA (b) (6)



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--

Best,

Terrence Matsuo
Washington Correspondent
[NK News](#) – News and opinion
[Korea Risk Group](#) – Institutional services
[NK Pro](#) – Research tools, data and premium analysis
(b) (6)
m USA + (b) (6)



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From: [Thad Strom](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: Request.
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 5:21:50 PM
Attachments: [DRAFT, PRE-DECISIONAL, PRE-DELIBERATIVE \(b\) \[REDACTED\] Report with Proposed Redactions.pdf](#)
[image001.png](#)

Here you go....

Thad Strom
Senior Advisor
U.S. Agency for Global Media
w) (b) (6) [REDACTED]
c) (b) (6) [REDACTED]



From: Sam Dewey (b) (6) [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2020 5:07 PM
To: Bill Maloney (b) (6) [REDACTED]
Cc: Thad Strom (b) (6) [REDACTED]
Subject: Request.

Bill.

Can you make these redactions and send the pdf as redacted to Thad

Thad this is the one Menendez's staff wants.

Thanks,

Sam

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

Subject: FW: Resume
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 11:18:32 AM
Attachments: (b) (6) [Re.pdf](#)

-----Original Message-----

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 9:12 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Resume

Regards,

(b) (6)

Sent from my iPad

From: (b) (6)
To: [Diane Cullo](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6); (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: Reworked contract list - Existing Funds
Date: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 12:00:45 PM
Attachments: [Requirement List EXISTING FUNDING 7.15.2020 Policy \(3\) \(1\) \(1\).xlsx](#)

Dear Diane and Jonathan,

I hope you are both well. Reflecting on our conversation from last Wednesday. I've reworked plans to award our remaining existing funding to fund two recent graduate production/office assistants that we can train up to help us with many of the essential tasks that are taking large swaths of our senior writers' time as we have had all such personnel cut and have not been permitted to bring in extra help in so long.

We will need to add funding to these and the video producer contracts you recently approved (thank you) by October or November at the latest. Barring a shutdown and if the CFO sees it a priority to give us our budget in October, we should be able to fund contracts for some of the remaining year. We will still need about (b) (4) to renew the contracts before the end of FY2021.

Please find a new breakdown of our current contract request list, (not including the already approved contracts). We would need approval on these right away as the deadline for new contracts is at the end of this week. We will send this same list up through the CFO's office today for your approval. Please note, the Storyhunter contract that we discussed is also included. It appears that the CFO may have somehow left it off your list for approval, though it is the same contract discussed in the budget meeting.

Best regards,

(b) (6)

Writer/Producer

Office of Policy

U.S. Agency for Global Media

(b) (6)

wk

cell

From: (b) (6)
To: Jonathan Bronitsky; Diane Cullo
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: Reworked contract list - Existing Funds
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 11:20:41 AM
Attachments: Requirement List EXISTING FUNDING 7.15.2020 Policy (3) (1) (1).xlsx

Hello Diane and Jonathan,

I hope you're both well! Today is the last day for us to put money on contracts per the agency deadlines. These are existing funds, so all we need is for you to send an approval down to (b) (6) and Chris Luer. Once we get this funding on the contracts, it will help us greatly with a couple of associate producers and we can start some pilot projects to get you some of the proof of concept and, with VOA cooperation, some analytics.

Regards,

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 12:00 PM
To: Diane Cullo (b) (6); Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: Reworked contract list - Existing Funds

Dear Diane and Jonathan,

I hope you are both well. Reflecting on our conversation from last Wednesday. I've reworked plans to award our remaining existing funding to fund two recent graduate production/office assistants that we can train up to help us with many of the essential tasks that are taking large swaths of our senior writers' time as we have had all such personnel cut and have not been permitted to bring in extra help in so long.

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Best regards,

(b) (6)

Writer/Producer

Office of Policy

U.S. Agency for Global Media

(b) (6)

wk

cell

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: RFA monthly report
Date: Monday, November 16, 2020 11:52:31 AM
Attachments: [RFA monthly report for October 2020.pdf](#)

FYSA.

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, November 13, 2020 17:07
To: (b) (6) >
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: RFA monthly report

Dear (b) (6),

Attached is RFA's report for the CEO. Please let me know if you have any questions or requests.

Thanks,

(b) (6)

Chief Strategy Officer
Radio Free Asia
2025 M Street, NW
Washington DC 20036

(b) (6)

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Visit us at www.rfa.org

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From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: RFA monthly report
Date: Monday, November 16, 2020 11:52:31 AM
Attachments: [RFA monthly report for October 2020.pdf](#)

FYSA.

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, November 13, 2020 17:07
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Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: RFA monthly report

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Attached is RFA's report for the CEO. Please let me know if you have any questions or requests.

Thanks,

(b) (6)

Chief Strategy Officer
Radio Free Asia
2025 M Street, NW
Washington DC 20036

(b) (6)

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From: [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: Seeking Advice about FTE with Pending Permanent Resident Application & Pending J-1 Extension
Date: Friday, July 10, 2020 9:26:02 PM
Attachments: [FW Do not send Thai FTE home yet - Do a Reinstatement of the J-1.msg](#)
[URGENT case of VOA \(b\) \(6\) .msg](#)
[Re Seeking Advice about FTE with Pending Permanent Resident Application Pending J-1 Extension.msg](#)
[RE Seeking Advice about FTE with Pending Permanent Resident Application Pending J-1 Extension.msg](#)
[Fw Burmese Service FTE J-1 visa extension \(b\) \(6\) .msg](#)
[Re Seeking Advice about FTE with Pending Permanent Resident Application Pending J-1 Extension.msg](#)

FYSA only

From: Elez Biberaj (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 4:22 PM
To: Andre Mendes (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6); Elez Biberaj (b) (6)
Subject: FW: Seeking Advice about FTE with Pending Permanent Resident Application & Pending J-1 Extension

Andre, Emily:

I am not sure if David Kligerman has raised these issues with the CEO's office, but I am forwarding for your consideration his email and attachments. Needless to say, the issue of J-1 visa holders has become one of the most urgent challenges facing VOA.

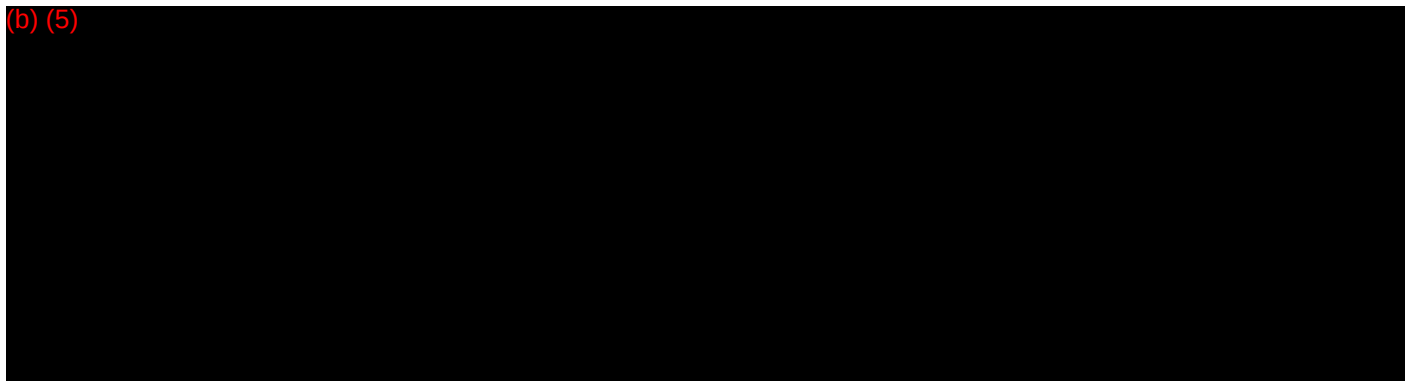
Thank you.

Elez

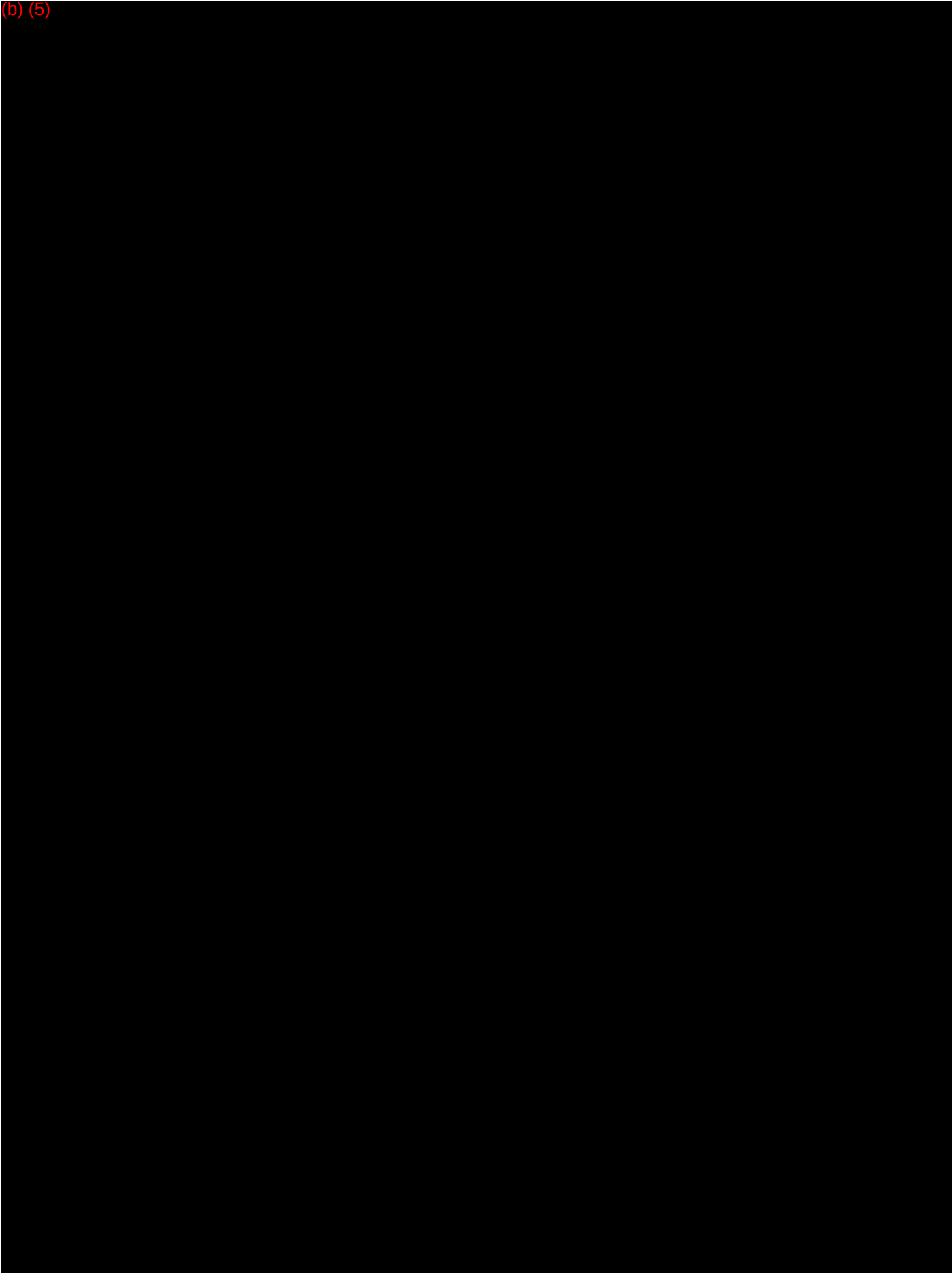
From: David Kligerman (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 3:39 PM
To: Elez Biberaj (b) (6); Kelu Chao (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6); David Kotz
(b) (6)
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: Seeking Advice about FTE with Pending Permanent Resident Application & Pending J-1 Extension

+ (b) (6); Dave Kotz; (b) (6)

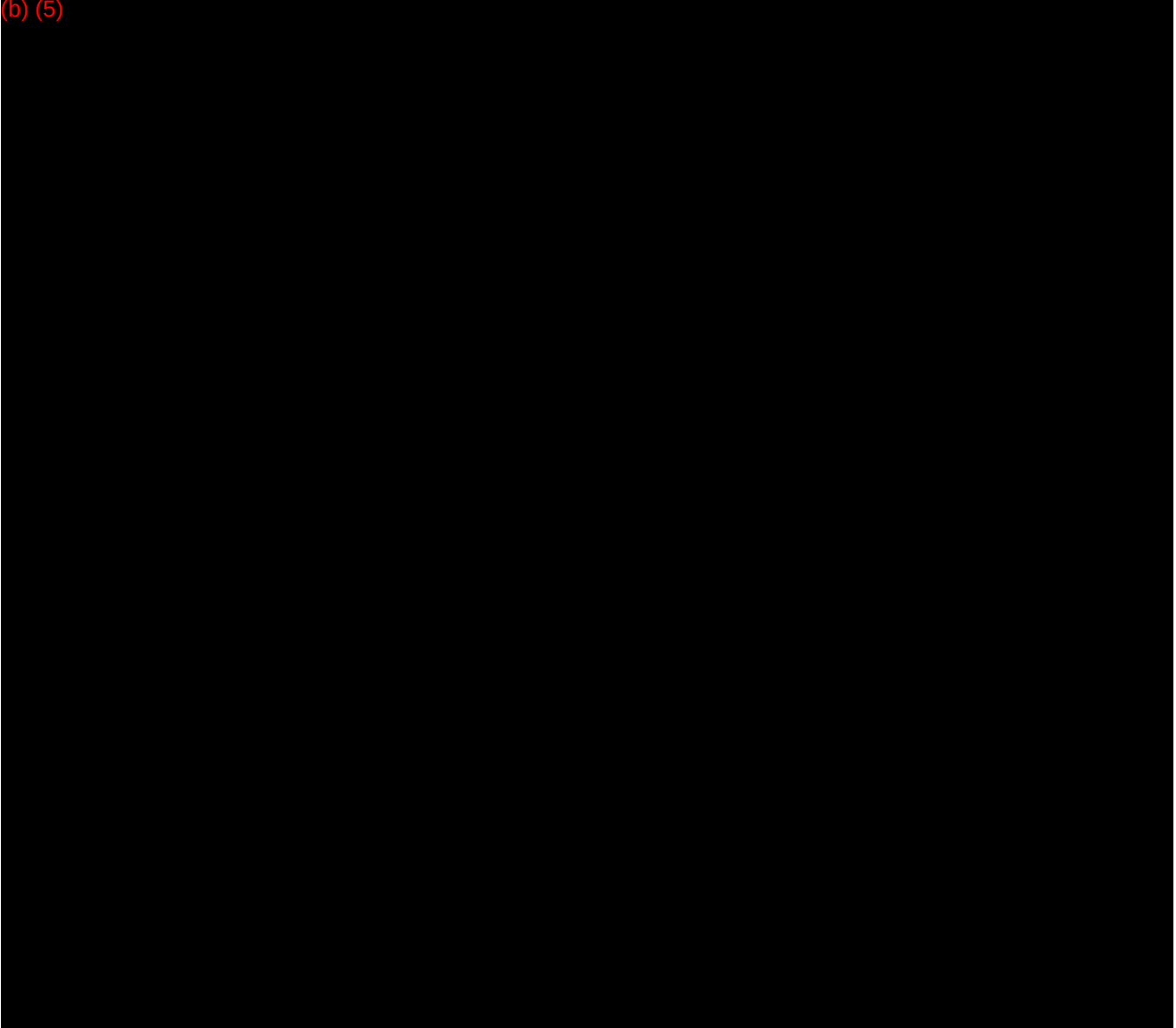
(b) (5)



(b) (5)



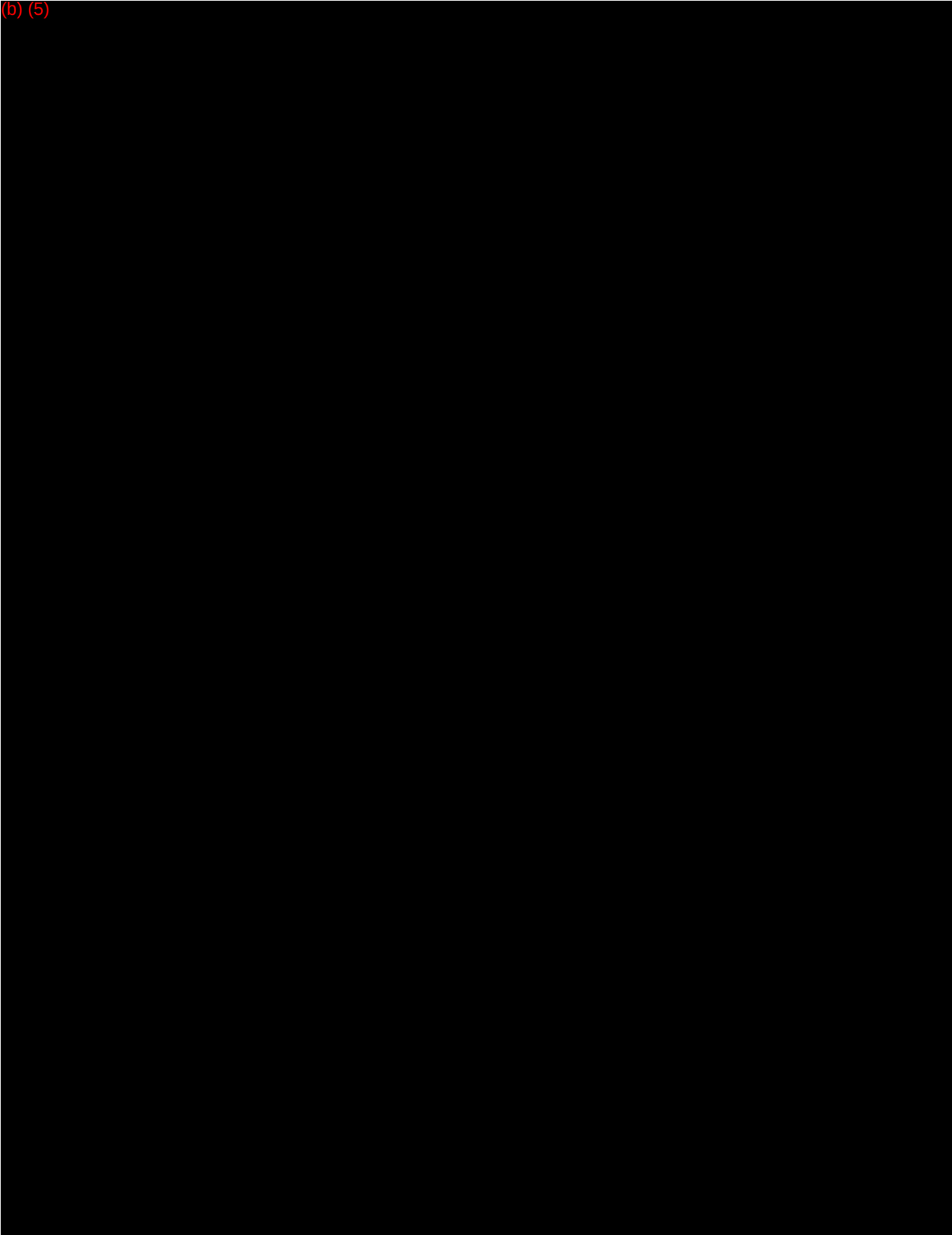
(b) (5)



(b) (5)



(b) (5)



(b) (5)

From: David Kligerman
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 6:47 PM
To: Elez Biberaj (b) (6)
Cc: Kelu Chao (b) (6); VOA Director's Office (b) (6); Elez Biberaj (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Seeking Advice about FTE with Pending Permanent Resident Application & Pending J-1 Extension

This is one of three emails that I saw on visas.

I will try and consolidate everything that I have seen/received into one email and answer the questions.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Elez Biberaj (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 5:31 PM
To: David Kligerman
Cc: Kelu Chao; (b) (6); VOA Director's Office; Elez Biberaj
Subject: FW: Seeking Advice about FTE with Pending Permanent Resident Application & Pending J-1 Extension

From: Kelu Chao (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 4:28 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Elez Biberaj (b) (6); VOA Director's Office (b) (6); (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Seeking Advice about FTE with Pending Permanent Resident Application & Pending J-1 Extension

+ David Kligerman.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 8, 2020, at 4:20 PM, (b) (6) wrote:

We also have the case of (b) (6) who is in (b) (6) has a J-1 and a PSC Offer,

and is planning to fly to the US on July 12. (As a reminder, (b) (6) was a stringer who we are bringing over because (b) (6).) We just need approval for (b) (6) to start before we have (b) (6) fly over.

This issue has been escalated to the front Office—both Marie and Matt are involved. I'm hoping for a quick approval.

I just wanted to quickly fill you in.

Thanks,

(b) (6)

From: Kelu Chao (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 4:15 PM
To: Elez Biberaj (b) (6)
Cc: VOA Director's Office (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: Seeking Advice about FTE with Pending Permanent Resident Application & Pending J-1 Extension

Just FYI. We will have more and more issues with J1, visa and green card sponsorship.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: David Kotz (b) (6)
Date: July 8, 2020 at 4:02:26 PM EDT
To: (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
(b) (6)
(b) (6), Kelu Chao (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Seeking Advice about FTE with Pending Permanent Resident Application & Pending J-1 Extension

My understanding is that (b) (6)'s extension expires on July 29, 2020 and (b) (6)'s expires on August 6, 2020.

Both are currently in the CEO's office awaiting signature.

David

*H. David Kotz, Esq.
Deputy Director, Office of Human Resources
Voice of America*

U.S. Agency for Global Media
330 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20237
Office phone: (b) (6) **; Cell phone:** (b) (6)

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From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 3:56 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6) i
(b) (6) David Kotz
(b) (6) ng
(b) (6); Kelu Chao (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Seeking Advice about FTE with Pending Permanent Resident Application & Pending J-1 Extension

(b) (6)
Thank you for the clarification. It seems to me that the best course of action is to send (b) (6) back to (b) (6) before August 6. We have a few more expirations of DS-2019 in EAP.

David, (b) (6), please advise on whether EAP should prep the following employees (whose J1 extension memos have been with the CEO) to return to their home countries:

(b) (6) (expiring August 6)
(b) (6) (expiring July 26)

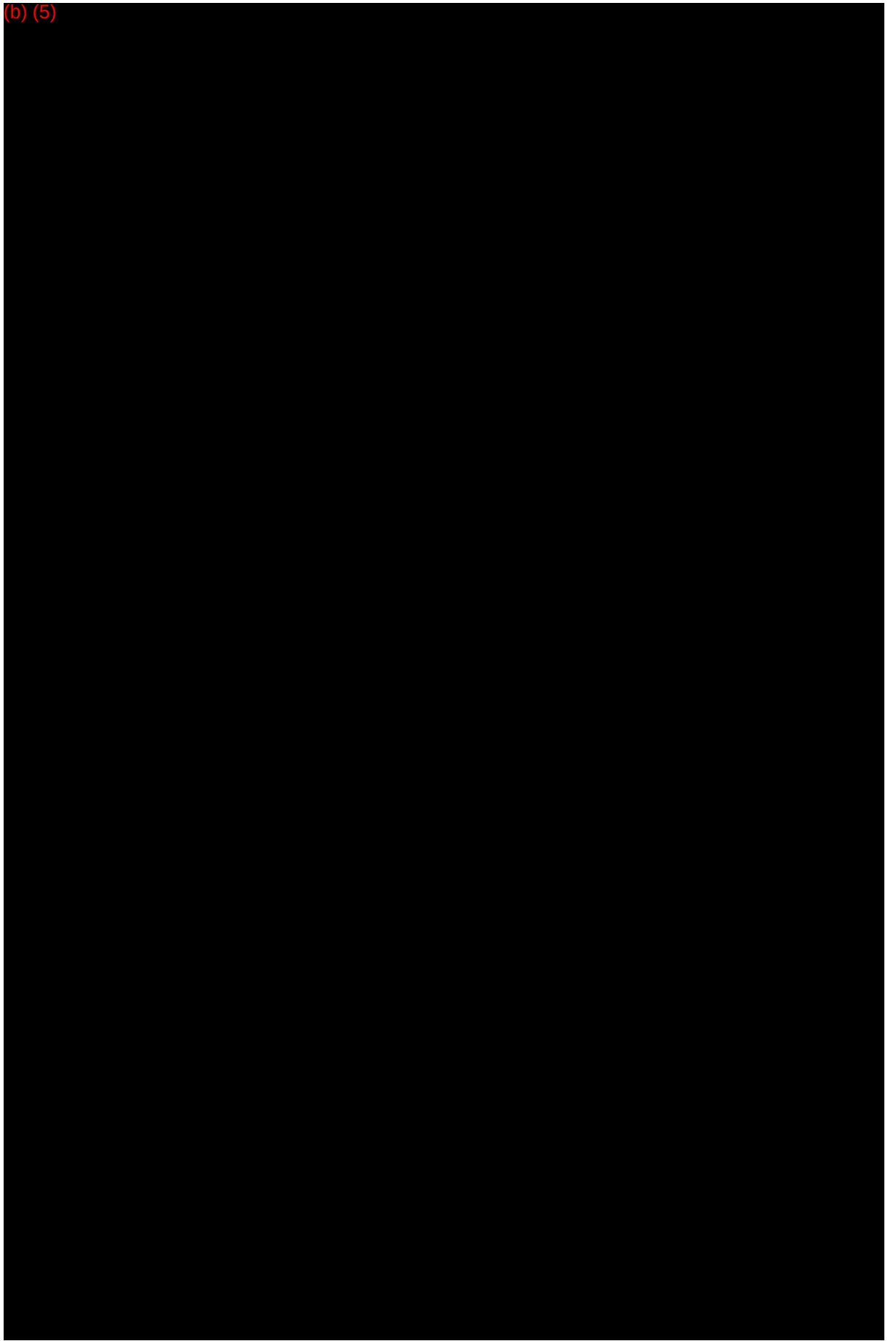
(b) (6), are (b) (6) and (b) (6) in the similar situation?)

Thank you,

(b) (6)
P: (b) (6)
Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 8, 2020, at 15:32, (b) (6)
(b) (6) wrote:

(b) (5)



(b) (5)



Chief, Operations Law

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 2:37 PM
To: (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Subject: Seeking Advice about FTE with Pending Permanent Resident Application & Pending J-1 Extension

Dear (b) (6),

I'm wondering if we can get your advice on one of our FTE's immigration process. (b) (6) from the (b) (6) Service is in the process of obtaining (b) (6) green card with

sponsorship from the agency. (b) is now on Phase 2 - before biometrics and work authorization. In the meantime, (b) DS-2019 will expire on August 6. (b) extension memo is now pending signature from the CEO's office.

In the case of the process being delayed, could (b) still be allowed to remain in the country past the 30-day grace period after August 6, or would (b) have to return to (b) (6) ?

Please kindly advise, and thank you so much in advance.

(b) (6)

Voice of America

(b) (6)

303 Independence Ave SW
Washington, D.C. 20237

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Subject: FW: Seeking your comment for a story
Date: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 4:06:00 PM

From: Jonathan Bronitsky
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 4:03 PM
To: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Cc: Montgomery, Lori (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Seeking your comment for a story

Paul, to be clear, I certainly did not agree to any terms. And your analogy doesn't hold up. Here's in fact what you're demanding, using your analogy. I "dictate" a price for your home. You refuse to accept that price. But in this case, when you refuse, you insist that I still give you money.

What is the point of offering something on background with a particular attribution if a reporter is going to identify a specific individual, anyway? It's procedure, as specifically noted in *The Washington Post's* own [Policies and Standards](#), that agency officials are permitted to go on background. You're of course free to press for "maximum revelation in attribution." But if you don't like what you receive, it's improper, again pursuant to your publication's Policies and Standards, to unilaterally identify an individual, let alone dictate that a source be named when they request withdrawing their comment. "USAGM spokesperson" is specific, far more specific than simply "an official" with an agency.

The only two options for consideration now cannot be including my name with comment, or including my name after declining or withdrawing comment. USAGM agrees to having the responses run as "an agency statement," from a "USAGM spokesperson," or from a "USAGM senior official."

From: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 3:33 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Cc: Montgomery, Lori (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Seeking your comment for a story

Thanks, Jonathan.

Let's keep the record straight here: You provided responses and UNILATERALLY dictated how those comments would be attributed and appear in print. This is not acceptable to me, as I told you.

I am happy to negotiate terms under which your statements will be attributed and used. But it's a negotiation, conducted in advance of any statement. These ARE "professional journalistic standards."

I'm sure you've had different experiences with other reporters, including possibly even those

from the Post. But that's MY standard.

As I told you, if you wanted to buy my house, you could dictate the price. But I'd be under no obligation to accept it. Same thing here—I'm happy to include your comments in my story, but only under terms that WE agree on, not those you, and you alone, demand.

You have every right to choose to withdraw your comments. In that event, I certainly won't publish them. But I reserve the right to report—quite accurately—that “Jonathan Bronitsky, the spokesman for USAGM, declined to offer a direct/on the record statement.”

This, too, is a “professional journalistic practice.”

My offer to negotiate something acceptable to both of us still stands. But time is running out. Our story will be published soon.

I also look forward to a fruitful relationship with you and USAGM. I *want* to publish your side of things; it's only right and fair that we do.

All we disagree about is how we'll go about doing so.

Thanks...Paul

On Sep 1, 2020, at 3:06 PM, Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6) wrote:

Paul, I'm looping in Ms. Montgomery.

I provided responses here, on background and attributable to a “USAGM spokesperson,” per previous *WaPo* house editorial guidance, provided through email exchange with one of your colleagues.

A fruitful relationship with USAGM moving forward hinges upon upholding professional journalistic standards. These responses are available as “an agency statement,” as was done before. It would be a significant breach of those standards for any publication to unilaterally attach a name to comments offered on background, and then threaten to still attach a name once those comments were withdrawn.

From: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 2:22 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Seeking your comment for a story

No. Put your name on it, Jonathan. What's the problem?

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)

Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 2:20 PM
To: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Seeking your comment for a story

Paul, would you be willing to accept the responses as an "agency statement," as was done with *The Washington Post* as [recently](#) [\[nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\]](#) as August 14?

From: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 1:30 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Seeking your comment for a story

Thanks, Jonathan!

The comments below are useful, and I would like to have them for my story, but I'm sorry that I can't agree unilaterally NOT to identify you as the source of them.

So I will propose this as a counter-offer: Either these comments are yours BY NAME, attributable to you on the record, or I will say that you, the spokesman for USAGM, had no direct comment.

It's up to you. Please let me know your preference.

Thanks again...Paul

On Sep 1, 2020, at 1:03 PM, Jonathan Bronitsky
(b) (6) wrote:

CAUTION: EXTERNAL SENDER

Hi, Paul.

The following responses are available on background, attributable to a "USAGM spokesperson." (Note: The responses to the first two inquiries are the same.)

Thanks for reaching out.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

=====

--Has USAGM found ANY evidence that any of its employees are foreign intelligence agents or have been compromised by foreign intelligence? Or is this threat merely theoretical?

“USAGM will not comment upon the specifics of an ongoing investigation. However, for at least the past 10 years, previous agency leadership failed to address severe and systemic security problems detailed in multiple OPM and ODNI security audits, leaving roughly 40 percent of USAGM’s current workforce improperly vetted. To disregard the gravity of this situation would be a dereliction of duty, as U.S. national security and the safety of the agency’s employees are jeopardized any time there is even a single security violation. USAGM’s new leadership is fully committed to fixing the immense disaster that it inherited.”

--Journalists at VOA say they are alarmed by Pack's suggestion that VOA may be harboring spies. They have said it throws a blanket of suspicion and disloyalty over their organization. More specifically, they say it could endanger VOA journalists working abroad. Terrorists and rogue regimes have accused journalists of spying in order to target them; now the head of an American government agency is suggesting there may indeed be spies working for VOA, RFE, RFA, etc. What's your reaction to this? Are these fears exaggerated?

“USAGM will not comment upon the specifics of an ongoing investigation. However, for at least the past 10 years, previous agency leadership failed to address severe and systemic security problems detailed in multiple OPM and ODNI security audits, leaving roughly 40 percent of USAGM’s current workforce improperly vetted. To disregard the gravity of this situation would be a dereliction of duty, as U.S. national security and the safety of the agency’s employees are jeopardized any time there is even a single security violation. USAGM’s new leadership is fully committed to fixing the immense disaster that it inherited.”

--Why would posing as a journalist for VOA or RFE or another USAGM-supervised network be "a great cover for a spy," as Pack told the Federalist? What sensitive government information would a spy have access to if he or she worked for a USAGM network?

“USAGM personnel, like many other federal employees, maintain access to government buildings, classified information, sensitive planning documents, IT systems, and high-ranking U.S. government officials.”

--Did USAGM play any role in ordering the removal of this story

from VOA's website last week:

<https://twitter.com/briciosegovia/status/1299754286579146758?s=20> [\[twitter.com\]](#) [\[nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\]](#)
[\[nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\]](#)

“USAGM supports the VOA actions and its investigation into conduct that might have transgressed the VOA Charter, VOA’s Best Practices Guide, VOA’s Journalistic Code, and agency Standards & Principles.”

From: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 10:13 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Seeking your comment for a story

Good morning, Jonathan...I'd like to get your comment for a story we're planning to publish later today.

The thrust of the story is Michael Pack's effort to ensure personnel security at USAGM and its agencies. He has said (most recently in the Federalist podcast) the agencies' personnel practices in the past made them vulnerable to penetration by foreign agents. He has taken several actions (such as declining to renew expiring visas of VOA journalists) in the name of national security.

So a few questions about this:

--Has USAGM found ANY evidence that any of its employees are foreign intelligence agents or have been compromised by foreign intelligence? Or is this threat merely theoretical?

--Why would posing as a journalist for VOA or RFE or another USAGM-supervised network be "a great cover for a spy," as Pack told the Federalist? What sensitive government information would a spy have access to if he or she worked for a USAGM network?

--Journalists at VOA say they are alarmed by Pack's suggestion that VOA may be harboring spies. They have said it throws a blanket of suspicion and disloyalty over their organization. More specifically, they say it could endanger VOA journalists working abroad. Terrorists and rogue regimes have accused journalists of spying in order to target them; now the head of an American government agency is

suggesting there may indeed be spies working for VOA, RFE, RFA, etc.
What's your reaction to this? Are these fears exaggerated?

--Did USAGM play any role in ordering the removal of this story from
VOA's website last

week: [https://twitter.com/briciosegovia/status/1299754286579146758?](https://twitter.com/briciosegovia/status/1299754286579146758?s=20)
[s=20 \[nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\]](#)
[\[nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\]](#)

Thanks for your responses.

Paul Farhi
Washington Post

--

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Diane Cullo](#); [Frank Wuco](#)
Subject: FW: Seeking your comment for a story
Date: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 10:14:00 AM
Importance: High

From: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 10:13 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Seeking your comment for a story

Good morning, Jonathan...I'd like to get your comment for a story we're planning to publish later today.

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--Journalists at VOA say they are alarmed by Pack's suggestion that VOA may be harboring spies. They have said it throws a blanket of suspicion and disloyalty over their organization. More specifically, they say it could endanger VOA journalists working abroad. Terrorists and rogue regimes have accused journalists of spying in order to target them; now the head of an American government agency is suggesting there may indeed be spies working for VOA, RFE, RFA, etc. What's your reaction to this? Are these fears exaggerated?

--Did USAGM play any role in ordering the removal of this story from VOA's website last week: <https://twitter.com/briciosegovia/status/1299754286579146758?s=20>

Thanks for your responses.

Paul Farhi
Washington Post

--

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Subject: FW: Seeking your comment for a story
Date: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 4:46:00 PM

From: Jonathan Bronitsky
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 4:46 PM
To: 'Farhi, Paul' (b) (6)
Cc: Montgomery, Lori (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Seeking your comment for a story

Paul, it's patently incorrect that I haven't offered attribution. I first offered attribution as a "USAGM spokesperson" and, later, as the discussion proceeded, additionally as either "an agency statement" or from a "USAGM senior official." *The Washington Post's* [Policies and Standards](#) make clear that the publication does accept such attribution, which is routinely run. If you don't wish to accept any of the three options offered above, then I will need to speak with your editor prior to your article's publication.

USAGM unsuccessfully attempted to reach Ms. Montgomery twice by phone. Please let us know when she or another supervising colleague will be available to speak about this matter.

From: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 4:25 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Seeking your comment for a story

Whoa. Hold on, Jonathan.

Yes, we didn't agree to any terms--that's precisely the problem! Instead, you imposed your terms (i.e., no attribution to you) on me. Again, this is not acceptable to me.

And, no, I'm not seeking to force you do anything other than negotiate. Again, the house analogy: You made an offer and demanded I take it. I refused and counter-offered. We can find mutually agreeable terms or not.

To be clear: I'm not going to publish your name in connection with these comments (as I've said, the comments on background are not acceptable to me, and publishing them on the record, **without your permission**, would be unfair and unethical). But if we fail to come to an agreement about how these comments can be used, I will be left with no choice: I will write that you, the press representative of USAGM, offered nothing on the record. Again, this is entirely accurate.

So, to summarize: I fulfilled my obligation to seek out comment from an important party in this story. You chose to place unacceptable restrictions on your response. I am now seeking better terms.

The ball is in your court. Please let me know if there's any change in the status quo.

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 4:03 PM
To: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Cc: Montgomery, Lori (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Seeking your comment for a story

Paul, to be clear, I certainly did not agree to any terms. And your analogy doesn't hold up. Here's in fact what you're demanding, using your analogy. I "dictate" a price for your home. You refuse to accept that price. But in this case, when you refuse, you insist that I still give you money.

What is the point of offering something on background with a particular attribution if a reporter is going to identify a specific individual, anyway? It's procedure, as specifically noted in *The Washington Post's* own [Policies and Standards](#), that agency officials are permitted to go on background. You're of course free to press for "maximum revelation in attribution." But if you don't like what you receive, it's improper, again pursuant to your publication's Policies and Standards, to unilaterally identify an individual, let alone dictate that a source be named when they request withdrawing their comment. "USAGM spokesperson" is specific, far more specific than simply "an official" with an agency.

The only two options for consideration now cannot be including my name with comment, or including my name after declining or withdrawing comment. USAGM agrees to having the responses run as "an agency statement," from a "USAGM spokesperson," or from a "USAGM senior official."

From: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 3:33 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Cc: Montgomery, Lori (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Seeking your comment for a story

Thanks, Jonathan.

Let's keep the record straight here: You provided responses and UNILATERALLY dictated how those comments would be attributed and appear in print. This is not acceptable to me, as I told you.

I am happy to negotiate terms under which your statements will be attributed and used. But it's a negotiation, conducted in advance of any statement. These ARE "professional journalistic standards."

I'm sure you've had different experiences with other reporters, including possibly even those

from the Post. But that's MY standard.

As I told you, if you wanted to buy my house, you could dictate the price. But I'd be under no obligation to accept it. Same thing here—I'm happy to include your comments in my story, but only under terms that WE agree on, not those you, and you alone, demand.

You have every right to choose to withdraw your comments. In that event, I certainly won't publish them. But I reserve the right to report—quite accurately—that “Jonathan Bronitsky, the spokesman for USAGM, declined to offer a direct/on the record statement.”

This, too, is a “professional journalistic practice.”

My offer to negotiate something acceptable to both of us still stands. But time is running out. Our story will be published soon.

I also look forward to a fruitful relationship with you and USAGM. I *want* to publish your side of things; it's only right and fair that we do.

All we disagree about is how we'll go about doing so.

Thanks...Paul

On Sep 1, 2020, at 3:06 PM, Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6) wrote:

Paul, I'm looping in Ms. Montgomery.

I provided responses here, on background and attributable to a “USAGM spokesperson,” per previous *WaPo* house editorial guidance, provided through email exchange with one of your colleagues.

A fruitful relationship with USAGM moving forward hinges upon upholding professional journalistic standards. These responses are available as “an agency statement,” as was done before. It would be a significant breach of those standards for any publication to unilaterally attach a name to comments offered on background, and then threaten to still attach a name once those comments were withdrawn.

From: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 2:22 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Seeking your comment for a story

No. Put your name on it, Jonathan. What's the problem?

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)

Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 2:20 PM
To: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Seeking your comment for a story

Paul, would you be willing to accept the responses as an “agency statement,” as was done with *The Washington Post* as [recently \[nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\] \[nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\]](#) as August 14?

From: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 1:30 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Seeking your comment for a story

Thanks, Jonathan!

The comments below are useful, and I would like to have them for my story, but I’m sorry that I can’t agree unilaterally NOT to identify you as the source of them.

So I will propose this as a counter-offer: Either these comments are yours BY NAME, attributable to you on the record, or I will say that you, the spokesman for USAGM, had no direct comment.

It’s up to you. Please let me know your preference.

Thanks again...Paul

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CAUTION: EXTERNAL SENDER

Hi, Paul.

The following responses are available on background, attributable to a “USAGM spokesperson.” (Note: The responses to the first two inquiries are the same.)

Thanks for reaching out.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

=====

--Has USAGM found ANY evidence that any of its employees are foreign intelligence agents or have been compromised by foreign intelligence? Or is this threat merely theoretical?

“USAGM will not comment upon the specifics of an ongoing investigation. However, for at least the past 10 years, previous agency leadership failed to address severe and systemic security problems detailed in multiple OPM and ODNI security audits, leaving roughly 40 percent of USAGM’s current workforce improperly vetted. To disregard the gravity of this situation would be a dereliction of duty, as U.S. national security and the safety of the agency’s employees are jeopardized any time there is even a single security violation. USAGM’s new leadership is fully committed to fixing the immense disaster that it inherited.”

--Journalists at VOA say they are alarmed by Pack's suggestion that VOA may be harboring spies. They have said it throws a blanket of suspicion and disloyalty over their organization. More specifically, they say it could endanger VOA journalists working abroad. Terrorists and rogue regimes have accused journalists of spying in order to target them; now the head of an American government agency is suggesting there may indeed be spies working for VOA, RFE, RFA, etc. What's your reaction to this? Are these fears exaggerated?

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“USAGM personnel, like many other federal employees, maintain access to government buildings, classified information, sensitive planning documents, IT systems, and high-ranking U.S. government officials.”

--Did USAGM play any role in ordering the removal of this story from VOA's website last week:

<https://twitter.com/briciosegovia/status/1299754286579146758?s=20> [\[twitter.com\]](#) [\[nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\]](#)
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“USAGM supports the VOA actions and its investigation into conduct that might have transgressed the VOA Charter, VOA’s Best Practices Guide, VOA’s Journalistic Code, and agency Standards & Principles.”

From: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 10:13 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Seeking your comment for a story

Good morning, Jonathan...I'd like to get your comment for a story we're planning to publish later today.

The thrust of the story is Michael Pack's effort to ensure personnel security at USAGM and its agencies. He has said (most recently in the Federalist podcast) the agencies' personnel practices in the past made them vulnerable to penetration by foreign agents. He has taken several actions (such as declining to renew expiring visas of VOA journalists) in the name of national security.

So a few questions about this:

--Has USAGM found ANY evidence that any of its employees are foreign intelligence agents or have been compromised by foreign intelligence? Or is this threat merely theoretical?

--Why would posing as a journalist for VOA or RFE or another USAGM-supervised network be "a great cover for a spy," as Pack told the Federalist? What sensitive government information would a spy have access to if he or she worked for a USAGM network?

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Thanks for your responses.

Paul Farhi
Washington Post

--

To: [Sam Dewey](#)
Subject: FW: Seeking your comment for a story
Date: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 11:56:02 PM

From: Jonathan Bronitsky
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 4:03 PM
To: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Cc: Montgomery, Lori (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Seeking your comment for a story

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[s=20 \[nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\]](#)
[\[nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\]](#)

Thanks for your responses.

Paul Farhi
Washington Post

--

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Sam Dewey](#)
Subject: FW: Serious, friendly critique, Michael
Date: Saturday, October 10, 2020 11:27:00 PM

From: Quin Hillyer (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 10:35 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Serious, friendly critique, Michael

will read

On Mon, Aug 24, 2020 at 9:33 PM Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6) wrote:

Hi, Quin.

For an alternative perspective, you might check out Ben Weingarten's *Newsweek* essay.

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.newsweek.com/security-failures-usg-media-agency-prove-need-hire-americans-first-opinion-1523895%3famp=1>

I'd be happy to chat. Thanks for reaching out.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

From: Michael Pack (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2020 2:25 PM
To: Mr. Quin Hillyer
Cc: Jonathan Bronitsky; CEO2016
Subject: Re: Serious, friendly critique, Michael

Yes, but these J1 Visa applications need to be vetted and we currently have no mechanism in place. Did you follow our security clearance issues? I also have national security responsibilities. If you want to write about it, you might want to talk to my comms guy, Jonathan Bronitsky, copied above, along with my personal office email.

You are a good friend and also a very fair minded journalist, so whatever you write will be worthwhile.

thanks.

Michael

On Aug 20, 2020, at 12:18 PM, Quin Hillyer (b) (6) wrote:

Michael,

You know I'm one of your foremost supporters in the media, but I agree entirely with this critique by my wise and knowledgeable colleague Tom Rogan:

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/michael-pack-plays-to-china-iran-and-russia-with-voice-of-america-firings>

Please do reconsider.

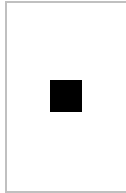
Thank you very much.

Best wishes,

Quin

(b) (6)

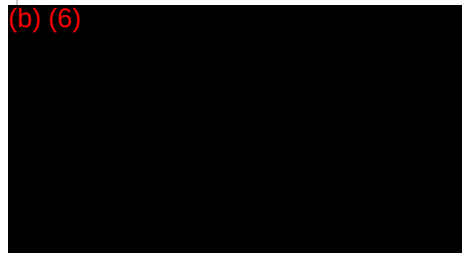
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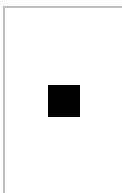
<https://www.amazon.com/Mad-Jones-Heretic-Accidental-Prophet/dp/1947942255>

Michael Pack

(b) (6)



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<https://www.amazon.com/Mad-Jones-Heretic-Accidental-Prophet/dp/1947942255>

Subject: FW: Stakeholders list for today's release
Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 1:02:38 PM
Attachments: [American Legislative Exchange Council 2020_08_03-09_46_57.csv](#)
[BeckyNortonDunlop 2020_08_03-13_29_49.csv](#)
[Cato 2020_08_03-10_20_31.csv](#)
[Claremont.csv](#)
[Cleta Mitchell 2020_08_03-10_45_47.csv](#)
[Competitive Enterprise Institute.csv](#)
[Concerned Women for America 2020_08_03-10_22_07.csv](#)
[Conservative Partnership Institute 2020_08_03-10_22_58.csv](#)
[Eagle Forum 2020_08_04-11_31_22.csv](#)
[Edwin Meese and Edwin Meese Center 2020_08_03-10_57_11.csv](#)
[FamilyResearchCouncil 2020_08_03-17_11_31.csv](#)
[FirstLibertyInstitute 2020_08_03-13_31_13.csv](#)
[HillsdaleCollege 2020_08_03-13_32_13.csv](#)
[Jim DeMintConservativePartnershipInstitue 2020_08_03-14_04_20.csv](#)
[SenateConservativesFund 2020_08_03-13_33_36.csv](#)
[Stakeholders List 1 2020_08_04-12_44_32.csv](#)
[Stakeholders List 2 2020_08_03-10_55_39.csv](#)
[TeaPartyPatriotsFund 2020_08_03-14_02_16.csv](#)
[TheHeritageFoundation 2020_08_03-14_24_14.csv](#)
[TheLeadershipInstitute 2020_08_03-14_27_59.csv](#)
[image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

From: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 12:54 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Stakeholders list for today's release

Hi Jonathan:

Attached are the stakeholders lists I was able to pull. This effort is a work in progress as many of these emails were not available; however, I am sure we can obtain! I'll keep working it.

Great job on all of this. (Do you advise I call in for both PA meetings today and listen in?)

Thank you,

Toni DeLancey, Ph.D.

Senior Advisor

Office of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Office: (b) (6) | Mobile: (b) (6) | Email: (b) (6)

U.S. Agency for Global Media | Broadcasting Board of Governors
330 Independence Ave. SW | Washington, DC 20237
<http://usagm.gov>

This communication, along with any attachments, is covered by federal and state law governing electronic communications and may contain confidential and legally privileged information. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution, use or copying of this message is strictly prohibited. If you have received this in error, please reply immediately to the sender and delete this message. Thank you.

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[Cleta Mitchell 2020_08_03-10_45_47.csv](#)
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[TheHeritageFoundation 2020_08_03-14_24_14.csv](#)
[TheLeadershipInstitute 2020_08_03-14_27_59.csv](#)
[image002.png](#)

From: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 12:54 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Stakeholders list for today's release

Hi Jonathan:

Attached are the stakeholders lists I was able to pull. This effort is a work in progress as many of these emails were not available; however, I am sure we can obtain! I'll keep working it.

Great job on all of this. (Do you advise I call in for both PA meetings today and listen in?)

Thank you,

Toni DeLancey, Ph.D.

Senior Advisor

Office of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Office: (b) (6) | Mobile: (b) (6) | Email: (b) (6)



U.S. Agency for Global Media | Broadcasting Board of Governors
330 Independence Ave. SW | Washington, DC 20237
<http://usagm.gov>

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From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Subject: FW: Time-sensitive request for comment
Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:36:00 PM
Attachments: [WB IG.OSC Complaint9.29.20.pdf](#)

From: Daniel Lippman (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:23 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: Time-sensitive request for comment

From: Daniel Lippman (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:14 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Time-sensitive request for comment

Hi,

Do you have a comment on this whistleblower complaint? My deadline is ASAP. My cell is (b) (6)

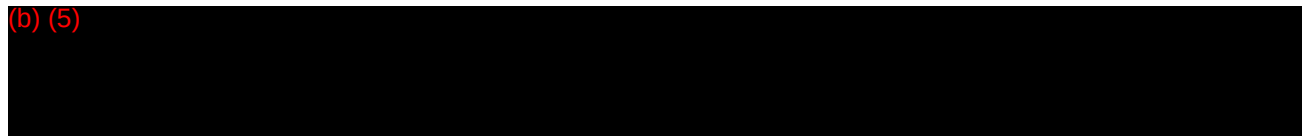
Many thanks,
Daniel

From: [Diane Cullo](#)
To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: Time-sensitive request for comment
Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 1:03:21 PM
Attachments: [WB IG.OSC Complaint9.29.20.pdf](#)

From: Diane Cullo
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 1:02 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: FW: Time-sensitive request for comment

From the Public Affairs email box, please send the following:

(b) (5)



From: Daniel Lippman (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:14 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Time-sensitive request for comment

Hi,

Do you have a comment on this whistleblower complaint? My deadline is ASAP. My cell is (b) (6)

(b) (6)

Many thanks,
Daniel

Subject: FW: Time-sensitive request for comment
Date: Thursday, April 22, 2021 1:08:21 PM
Attachments: [WB IG.OSC Complaint9.29.20.pdf](#)

From: Daniel Lippman (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:23 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: Time-sensitive request for comment

From: Daniel Lippman (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:14 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Time-sensitive request for comment

Hi,

Do you have a comment on this whistleblower complaint? My deadline is ASAP. My cell is (b) (6).
(b) (6).

Many thanks,
Daniel

From: [Daniel Lippman](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Fw: Time-sensitive request for comment
Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:22:45 PM
Attachments: [WB IG.OSC Complaint9.29.20.pdf](#)

From: Daniel Lippman (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:14 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Time-sensitive request for comment

Hi,

Do you have a comment on this whistleblower complaint? My deadline is ASAP. My cell is (b) (6)
(b) (6)

Many thanks,
Daniel

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Subject: FW: Time-sensitive request for comment
Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:38:00 PM
Attachments: [WB IG.OSC Complaint9.29.20.pdf](#)

From: Daniel Lippman (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:23 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: Time-sensitive request for comment

From: Daniel Lippman (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:14 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Time-sensitive request for comment

Hi,

Do you have a comment on this whistleblower complaint? My deadline is ASAP. My cell is (b) (6) (b) (6).

Many thanks,
Daniel

From: [Michael Pack](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: TRNN Correspondent Reaching Out
Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 2:16:26 PM

fyi

Michael Pack
Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Agency for Global Media

(b) (6)

From: Aman Azhar (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at 9:28 AM
To: Michael Pack (b) (6), Public Affairs (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Subject: TRNN Correspondent Reaching Out

Good morning Mr. Pack and USAGM Team:

I sent below queries on August 4 and have followed up a number of times since. I've spoken with VOA public affairs as well who say USAGM is taking the lead on the matter involving suspension of VOA contractors. I'm filling my report today and writing my questions down again for your input.

- 1) Has any responsibility been fixed at the level of full time supervisory staff including service chief and the person managing social media portfolio?
- 2) Is USAGM/VOA following a policy of not renewing J-1 visas given that several contractors are awaiting renewal and noClear word is offered by the two managements?

Thanks and looking forward to hearing from your office.

My best regards,

- Aman

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Aman Azhar** (b) (6)
Date: Tue, Aug 4, 2020 at 3:24 PM
Subject: TRNN Correspondent Reaching Out
To: (b) (6)
CC: (b) (6)

Dear Mr. Pack:

I hope this finds you well. I'm a correspondent for The Real News (realnews.com) and following up on the recent reports about the serious violations committed by VOA (Urdu language service) that your office is investigating. I would much appreciate if your office could bring some additional clarity to my reporting and provide responses to the following questions:

1. What measures are being taken to investigate this matter thoroughly and fix the responsibility given the seriousness of the violations including the violation of VOA charter and the Hatch Act, interference in US elections and criminal negligence of editorial oversight?
2. What safeguards are available to VOA managers to ensure that the VOA charter is followed and the US national security interests are protected?
3. There is an impression that the contractors (PSCs) with no supervisory powers are being scapegoated, whereas the supervising full time staff responsible for day-to-day editorial oversight are being protected. Can you clarify if any action has been taken against the service chief and other managing staff for instance?
4. Will the investigations determine whether the managers of the service have the required qualifications, experience and skill sets to provide leadership on matters involving national security and securing US national interests in their day-to-day programming?
5. How would your leadership ensure that such serious violations do not take place in future that can compromise US national interests by harming the reputation of the national broadcaster and exposing it to criticism from international adversaries?

While I look forward to your considered response on the above, please feel free to reach me on my direct line: 202.812.1477.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing what you have to say.

- Aman

--

=====

Aman Azhar

Correspondent

The Real News Network (TRNN)

Pronouns: He/Him

M: (b) (6)

T: (b) (6)

W: therealnews.com

=====

--

=====

Aman Azhar

Climate Change Correspondent

The Real News Network (TRNN)

Pronouns: He/Him

M: (b) (6)

T: (b) (6)

W: therealnews.com

The future depends on knowing. Donate today at therealnews.com/donate

=====

From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Diane Cullo](#); [Thad Strom](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Subject: FW: Turner v AGM
Date: Tuesday, October 27, 2020 11:26:40 AM
Attachments: [27 - Defts Oppn to PI.pdf](#)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, October 26, 2020 11:09 PM
To: Sam Dewey (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: Turner v AGM

Sam,

Here is the brief as just filed.

Thanks,

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, October 26, 2020 7:12 PM
To: Sam Dewey (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Subject: Turner v AGM

Sam,

Here is the "final" draft—pending final citations to the Pack Declaration and the Rescission. Once we have those two documents, we should be able to file.

Thanks,

(b) (6)

From: [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: Urgent Requested Termination of PSCs
Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 12:45:32 PM
Importance: High

From: Andre Mendes (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:42 AM
To: Michael Pack (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6);
Morvared Namdarkhan (b) (6); Diane Cullo (b) (6)
Subject: FW: Urgent Requested Termination of PSCs
Importance: High

Michael et al;

See below. Looks like VOA is ready to execute on the summary firing of the 4 PSCs involved in the Urdu video incident.

Below, you will find a detailed timeline of the video publishing and description/translation of its contents.

They will not proceed without your approval but will be ready to act immediately upon you granting it.

Please let me know if you have any questions, I might answer on this subject.

Best regards,

André

From: Elez Biberaj (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:36 AM
To: Andre Mendes (b) (6)
Cc: Elez Biberaj (b) (6)
Subject: FW: Urgent Requested Termination of PSCs

Andre,
FYI.
Elez

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:32 AM
To: (b) (6)
(b) (6)

Cc: Elez Biberaj (b) (6) David Kotz
(b) (6) Kelu Chao
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: Urgent Requested Termination of PSCs

(b) (6)

I have started the notices for termination for all parties involved. CON has determined and decided based on the information submitted in the matter regarding the actions of the Urdu PSC's to issue the notices effective today. Unless the situation has changed I will have the notices ready for OGC review this afternoon.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Thank you

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:12 AM
To: (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Cc: Elez Biberaj (b) (6) David Kotz
(b) (6); Kelu Chao
(b) (6)
Subject: FW: Urgent Requested Termination of PSCs

Colleagues,

VOA requests to terminate immediately four PSCs for cause for posting on Facebook a story that resembles a campaign advertisement for Vice President Biden with no balance, thus violating VOA's journalism standards and Best Practices. If an initial suspension is required to comply with the contract, please advise.

The posting was produced and reviewed by four Urdu Service PSCs on July 22 by Digital Lead (b) (6) (b) (6) and (b) (6).

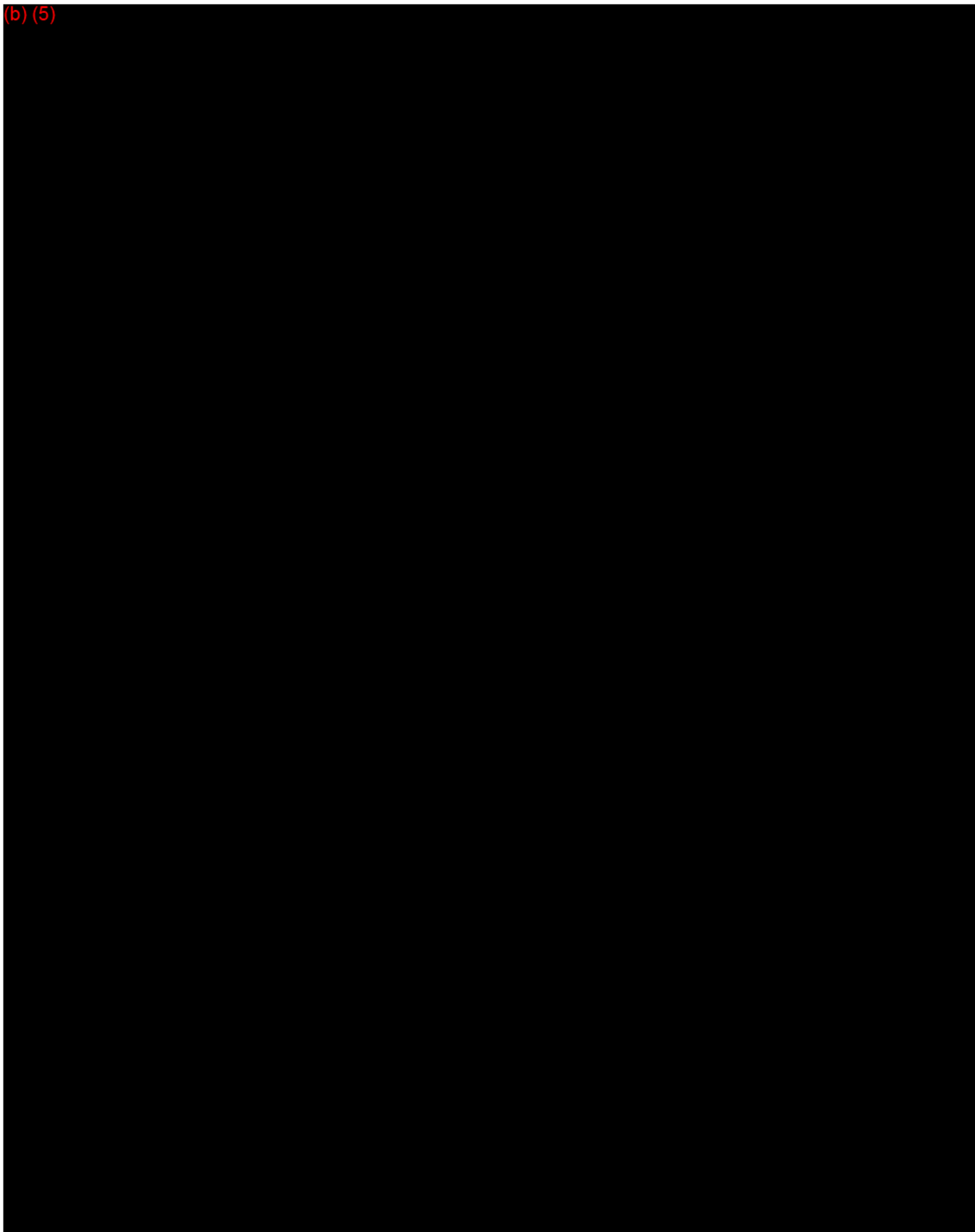
<https://www.facebook.com/voaurdu/videos/603326047281871>

VOA removed the original video posting.

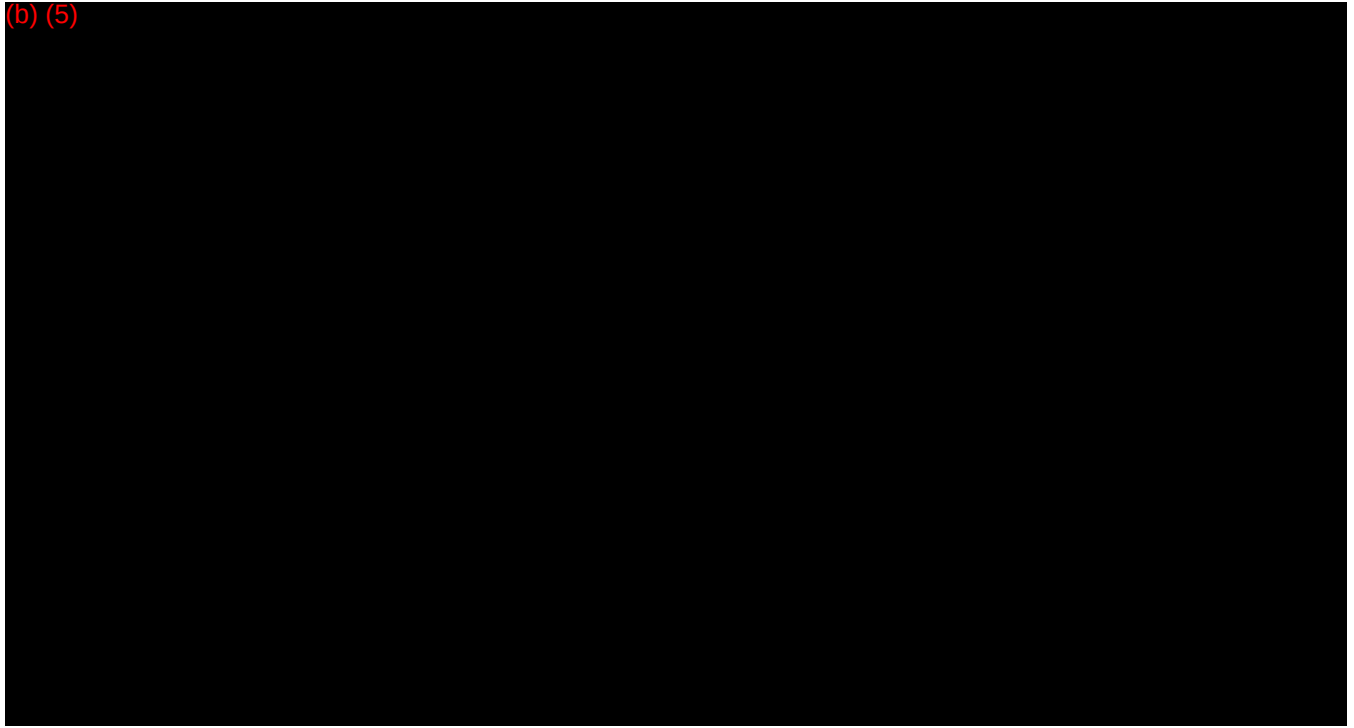
Please note that (b) (6) is on a J-1 Visa that expires Nov. 18, 2020.

Below is a description of the events and our response this issue for internal use only and our response.

(b) (5)



(b) (5)



Translation of the subtitles on the video (italics are Joe Biden speaking in the video):

I will end the Muslim ban on Day One: Joe Biden

Presidential candidate Joe Biden's address to American Muslims

Hadith from the Prophet Muhammad instructs whomever among you sees a wrong, let him change it with his hand. If he is not able, then with his tongue, if he is not able, then with his heart.

Joe Biden delivered the address in an online event

The event was organized to mobilize Muslims to vote

We all have the same fundamental beliefs

I thank you for your resolve to play your role in November

Your voice is your vote, your vote is your voice

Muslim Americans' voices matter.

I will be a president that seeks out and incorporates and listens to the ideas and concerns of Muslim Americans on everyday issues that matter most to our communities. I will include Muslims in my administration.

The Trump administration has banned people from several Muslim countries to come to the United States.

This Muslim organization is formally supporting Joe Biden.

(Women) Muslim members of Congress have also joined the organization in this support

Translation of the original text story seen on FB and website:

I will include Muslims in my administration: Joe Biden promises

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has said if he becomes the President he will incorporate and listens to the ideas and concerns of Muslim Americans on everyday issues that matter most to the communities. "I will include Muslims in my administration."

He made these remarks he made while addressing an online event, titled Million Muslim Votes. The event was organized by an organization of American Muslims called Emgage Action.

It is worth mentioning that many elected American Muslims have announced their support for Joe Biden in the next presidential election in a letter to the organization. Among them are Minnesota Congressman Alhan Omar, Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, and Indiana Member congressman Andre Carson.

"After Becoming President, I will try to address the suggestions and concerns of American Muslims in these everyday matters, listen to and act on what is important to our communities," Biden said. "If I have the honor of being your president, I will end the Muslim ban on day one."

Joe Biden was referring to the ban that the Trump administration imposed on citizens of certain Muslim countries coming to the United States.

"We all have the same basic beliefs. And I want to thank you for playing a key role in November elections this year. You are doing things that have never been done before. You are registering one million Muslims to vote in November. This is important. Your voice is your vote. Your vote is your voice. American Muslims' voice matters. I'm not asking for your vote because Donald Trump is not qualified for the presidency. I want to work with you in your partnership. I wish you are involved in decision making when we rebuild the nation," Senator

Biden said.

The Muslim member of the U.S. Congress, Alhan Omar, was supporting Bernie Sanders earlier. But after his presidential campaign ended in April, she has been supporting Biden. The former vice president wants to mobilize Muslim voters in the presidential election. The number of Muslim voters in many key states can play a decisive role. In the upcoming presidential election, Muslim voters can play an important role in several States. In 2016, President Trump won Michigan by less than 11,000 votes. The State has 150,000 Muslim voters.

President Trump's administration has not only banned Muslim nationals from coming to the United States, but also withheld the nuclear deal with Iran. These decisions have been criticized by American Muslim leaders.

The end!

(b) (6)

VOA

Senior Advisor to the Director

330 Independence Ave., SW

Washington, DC 20237

(b) (6)

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From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: URGENT VOA ISSUE
Date: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 12:26:43 AM

From: Sam Dewey

Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 11:58 PM

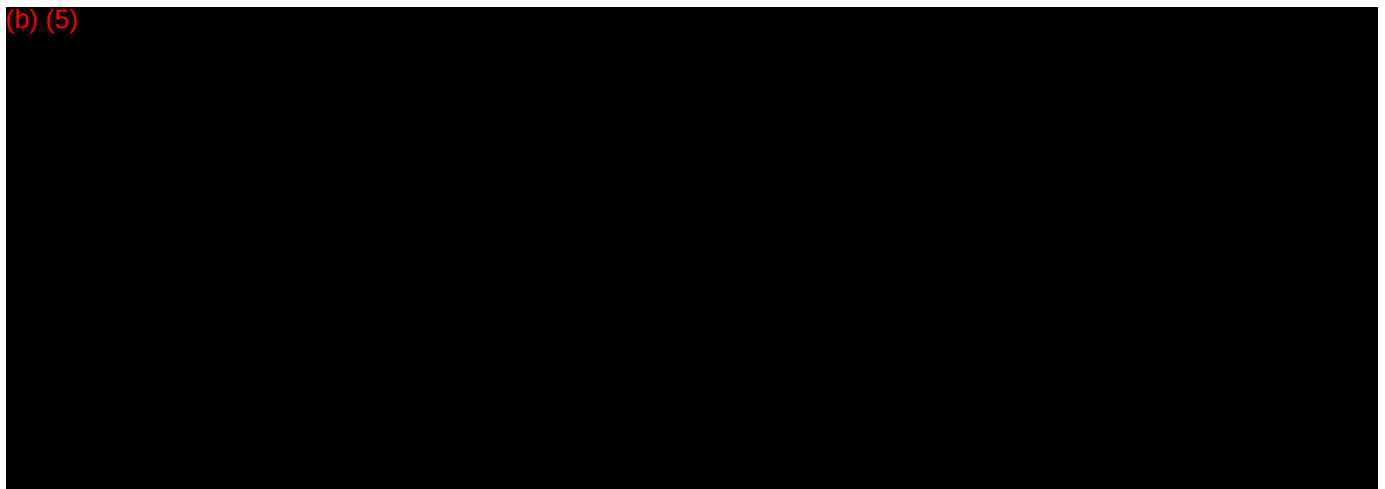
To: (b) (6)

Cc: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6);
David Kotz (b) (6); Kelu Chao (b) (6); Elez Biberaj
(b) (6); Frank Wuco (b) (6)

Subject: RE: URGENT VOA ISSUE

(b) (6) :

(b) (5)



Best,

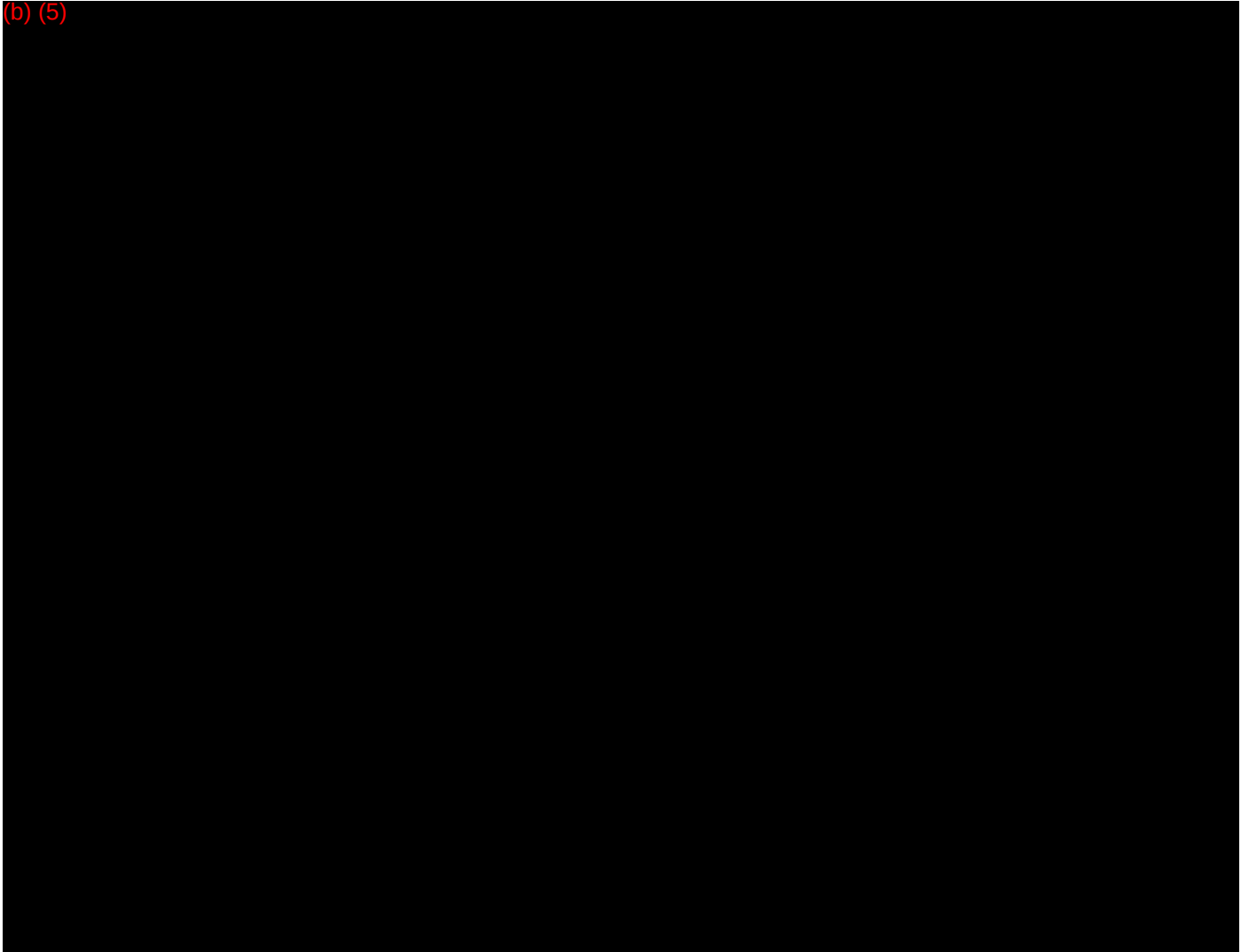
Sam

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Saturday, August 29, 2020 8:16 PM
To: Sam Dewey (b) (6)
Cc: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6);
David Kotz (b) (6); Kelu Chao (b) (6); Elez Biberaj
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: URGENT VOA ISSUE

Hi Sam,

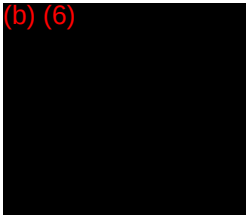
I know Elez has been asked to brief the CEO Monday about this. But I can answer these questions:

(b) (5)



Best regards,

(b) (6)



(m)

(o)

From: Sam Dewey (b) (6)

Sent: Saturday, August 29, 2020 4:34 PM

To: (b) (6)

Cc: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6);

David Kotz (b) (6); Kelu Chao (b) (6); Elez Biberaj

(b) (6)

Subject: RE: URGENT VOA ISSUE

Importance: High

(b) (6) et al:

(b) (5)

Thanks!

Sam

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Friday, August 28, 2020 9:14 PM

To: Sam Dewey (b) (6)

Cc: Frank Wuco (b) (6) >; Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6)

David Kotz (b) (6); Kelu Chao (b) (6) >; Elez Biberaj

(b) (6)

Subject: RE: URGENT VOA ISSUE

Hello Sam,

Good to e-meet you. I'm the VOA Deputy for Programming. Thanks very much for bringing this to our attention. We hate these violations of journalistic ethics. They are a big deal to us. In the year and a half the PSC program has been in effect, our group has handled PSC disciplinary issues consistently and firmly, in concert with the VOA News Standards Editor. As per with our procedures in a case like this, we have taken down the material in question and

begun our investigation. We will be interviewing those involved and taking appropriate action.

(b) (6)'s visa expires tonight at midnight, and (b) (6) was already being removed from the system. We accelerated that process when we learned of the issue.

Thanks again for your email. We're on the same page and agree that it should be dealt with swiftly and decisively.

All the best,

(b) (6)

VOA

(b) (6)

(o)

(m)

From: Sam Dewey (b) (6)

Sent: Friday, August 28, 2020 5:42 PM

To: Elez Biberaj (b) (6); Kulu Chao (b) (6)

(b) (6) David Kotz (b) (6)

Cc: Frank Wuco (b) (6) Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6)

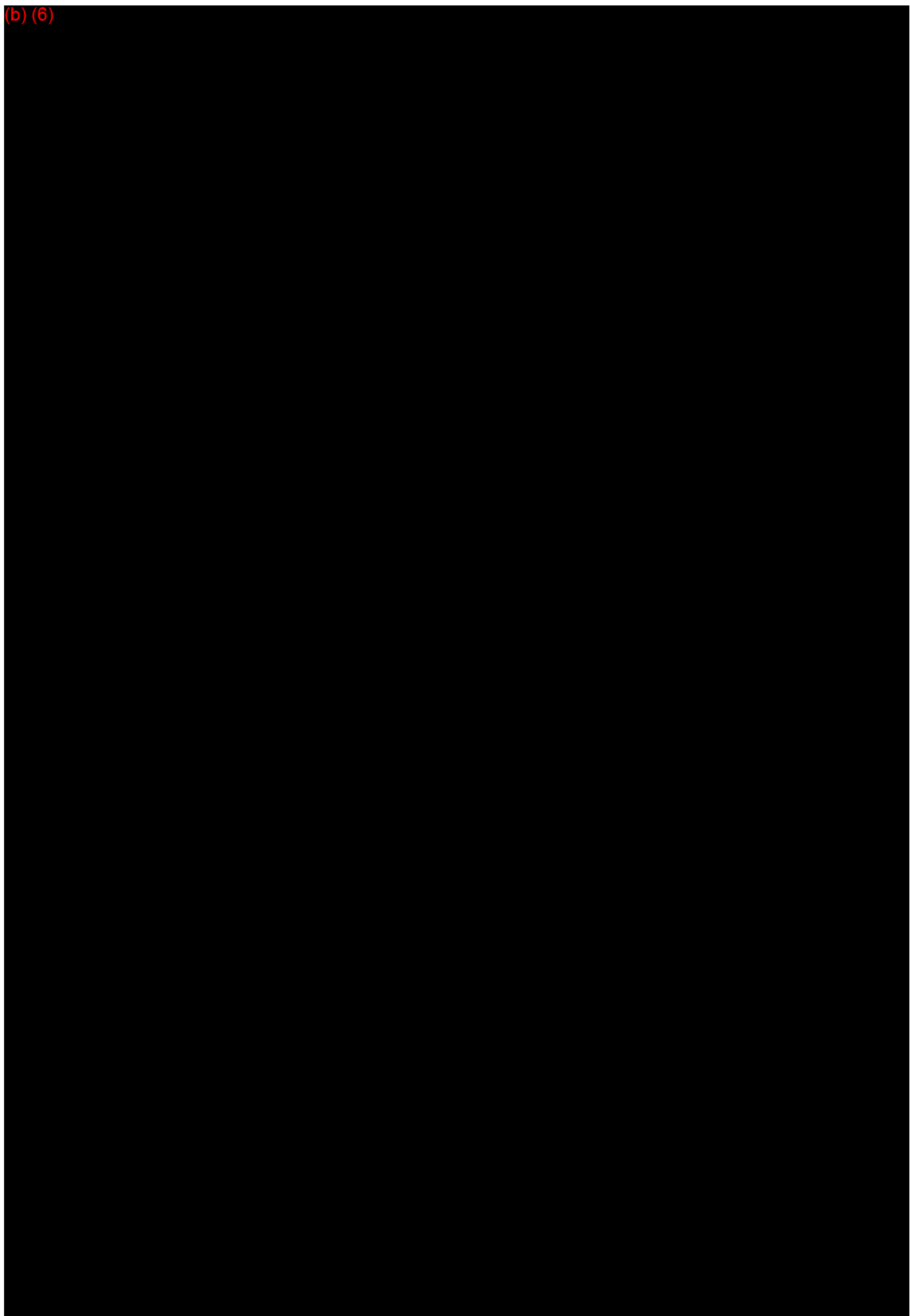
Subject: URGENT VOA ISSUE

Importance: High

All:

(b) (5)

(b) (6)



(b) (5)



Best,

Sam

From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: URGENT VOA ISSUE
Date: Friday, August 28, 2020 9:19:15 PM

FYSA

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, August 28, 2020 9:14 PM
To: Sam Dewey (b) (6)
Cc: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6);
David Kotz (b) (6); Kelu Chao (b) (6); Elez Biberaj
(b) (6)
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: URGENT VOA ISSUE

Hello Sam,

Good to e-meet you. I'm the VOA Deputy for Programming. Thanks very much for bringing this to our attention. We hate these violations of journalistic ethics. They are a big deal to us. In the year and a half the PSC program has been in effect, our group has handled PSC disciplinary issues consistently and firmly, in concert with the VOA News Standards Editor. As per with our procedures in a case like this, we have taken down the material in question and begun our investigation. We will be interviewing those involved and taking appropriate action.

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Thanks again for your email. We're on the same page and agree that it should be dealt with swiftly and decisively.

All the best,

(b) (6)

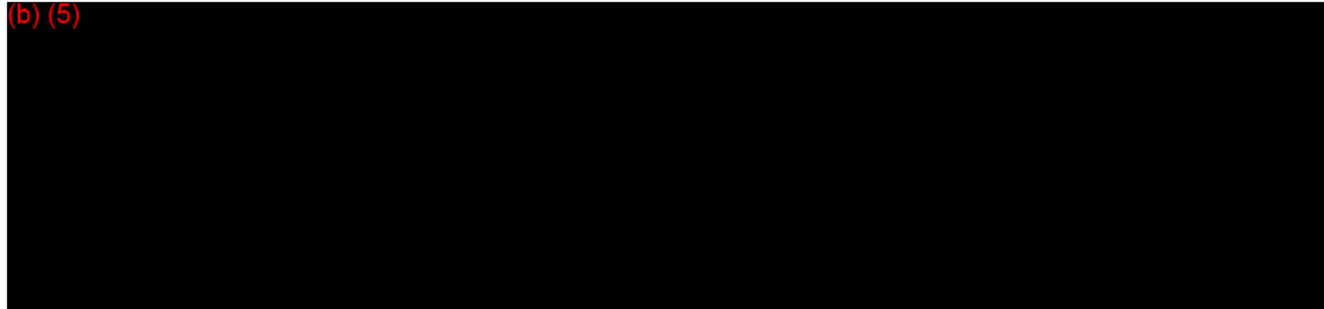
VOA

(b) (6) (o)
(b) (6) (m)

From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: URGENT VOA ISSUE
Date: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 12:29:15 AM

Pre-Decisional/ Deliberative/AC/AWP

(b) (5)



Best,

Sam

From: Sam Dewey

Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 11:58 PM

To: (b) (6)

Cc: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6);

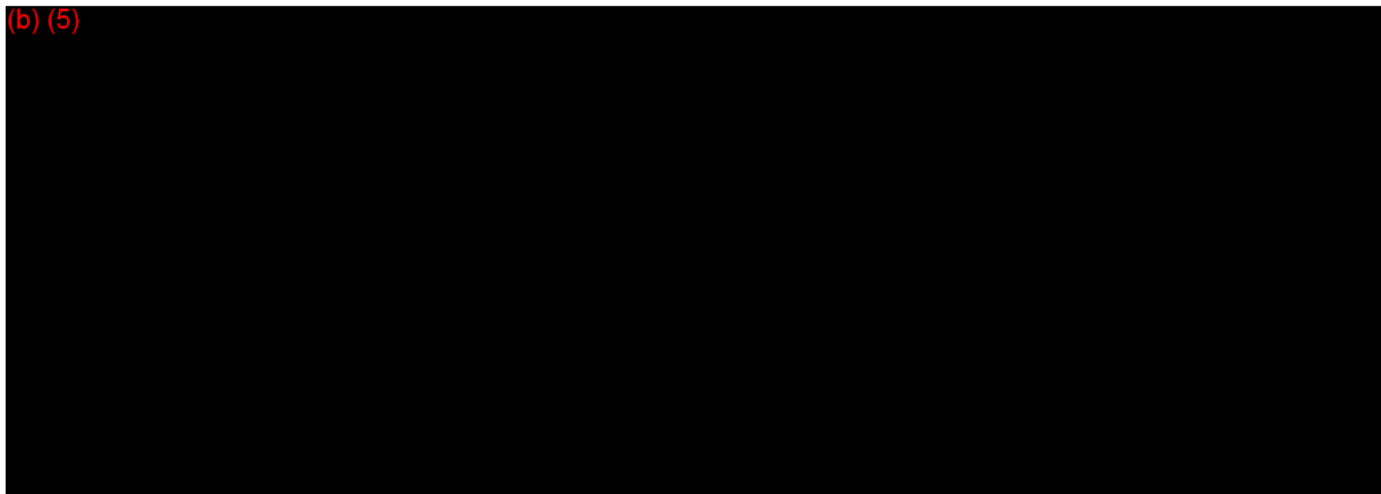
David Kotz (b) (6); Kelu Chao (b) (6); Elez Biberaj

(b) (6); Frank Wuco (b) (6)

Subject: RE: URGENT VOA ISSUE

(b) (6) :

(b) (5)



Best,

Sam

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Saturday, August 29, 2020 8:16 PM
To: Sam Dewey (b) (6)
Cc: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6);
David Kotz (b) (6); Kelu Chao (b) (6); Elez Biberaj
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: URGENT VOA ISSUE

Hi Sam,

I know Elez has been asked to brief the CEO Monday about this. But I can answer these questions:

1) (b) (6), which is what we do when visas expire without action by the CEO, because USAGM has continued to say publicly that all visa status is being “reviewed,” rather than being allowed to expire. While we deactivate their security badges, lock them out of our computer system, and notify agencies where they hold press credentials that they no longer work for the agency, we do not take employees whose visas have not been acted on off the books until they leave the country or after 30 days elapses, whichever comes first. Thirty days is the “grace period” authorized by USCIS for holders of expired visas to leave the country. This gives USAGM extra time to complete the visa review it says it is doing, potentially allowing visa holders to be reinstated. Whether we accelerate (b) (6)’s termination date, either for the convenience of the government or for misconduct, will depend on what we learn in our investigation.

2) Yesterday, we changed the article about (b) (6) interview to delete the paragraphs that to us constituted the conflict (they were at the end of the story). We also took down the video of the interview pending our further review and likely editing. We are going to look at the video on Monday to see in what form we want to post it (the rest of it, selected soundcuts, etc.). This morning, the video was briefly posted on Twitter, and we took it down again. According to what (b) (6) himself tweeted, the posting may have been done by an automated scheduling program for tweets that many organizations use. The Latin America Division, however, believes it may have been done by someone with Spanish Service’s Twitter password (which they say (b) (6) was not authorized to have). We’ll have our tech experts figure the true story next week, as part of our investigation.

I’ll keep you posted. Incidentally, when time is of the essence, feel free to call me at any time.

Best regards,

(b) (6)

(m)

(o)

From: Sam Dewey (b) (6)

Sent: Saturday, August 29, 2020 4:34 PM

To: (b) (6)

Cc: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6);

David Kotz (b) (6); Kelu Chao (b) (6); Elez Biberaj

(b) (6)

Subject: RE: URGENT VOA ISSUE

Importance: High

(b) (6) et al:

(b) (5)

Thanks!

Sam

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Friday, August 28, 2020 9:14 PM

To: Sam Dewey (b) (6)
Cc: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6);
David Kotz (b) (6); Kelu Chao (b) (6); Elez Biberaj
(b) (6)
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: URGENT VOA ISSUE

Hello Sam,

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(b) (6)'s visa expires tonight at midnight, and he was already being removed from the system. We accelerated that process when we learned of the issue.

Thanks again for your email. We're on the same page and agree that it should be dealt with swiftly and decisively.

All the best,

(b) (6)

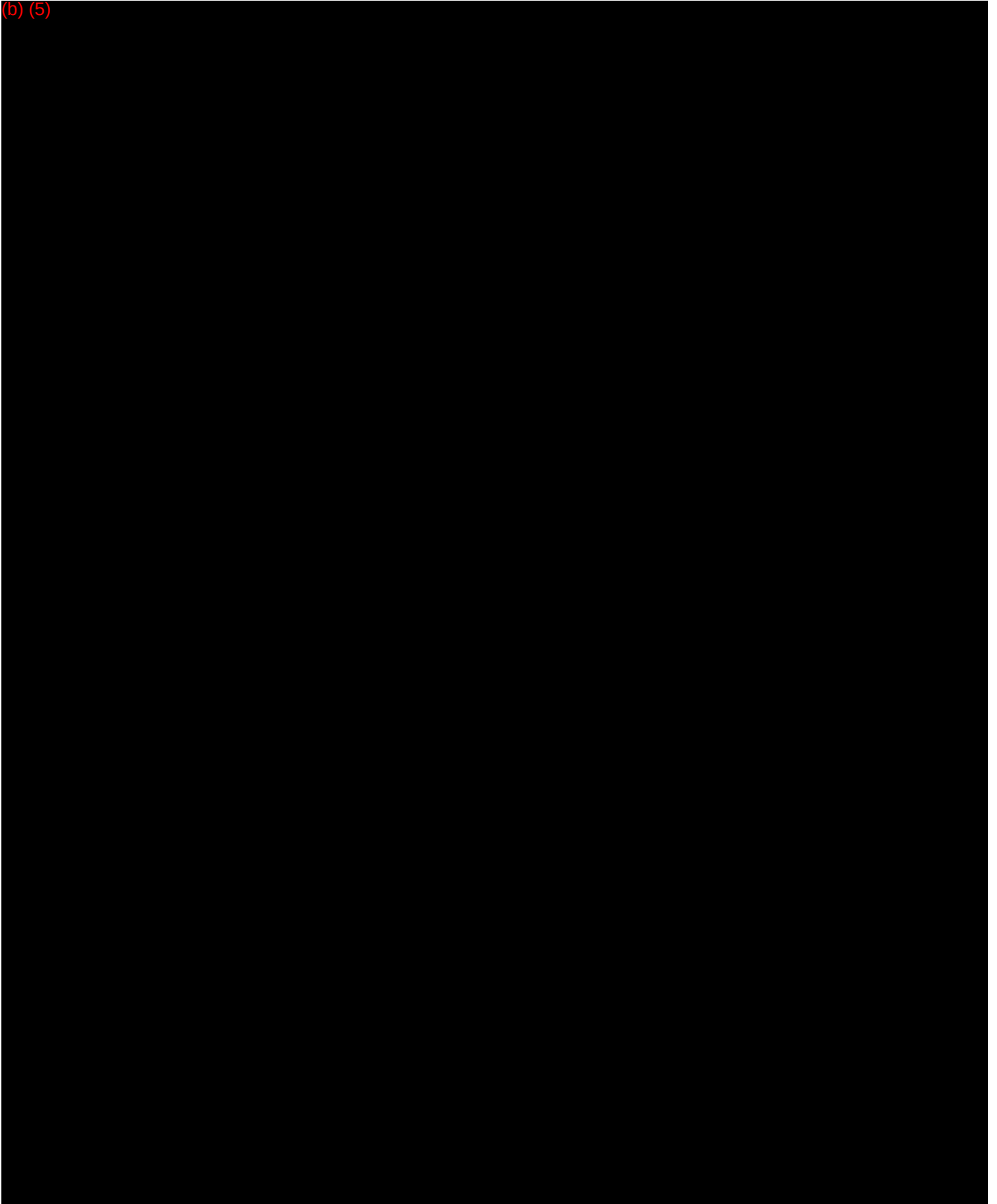
VOA

(b) (6) (o)
(b) (6) (m)

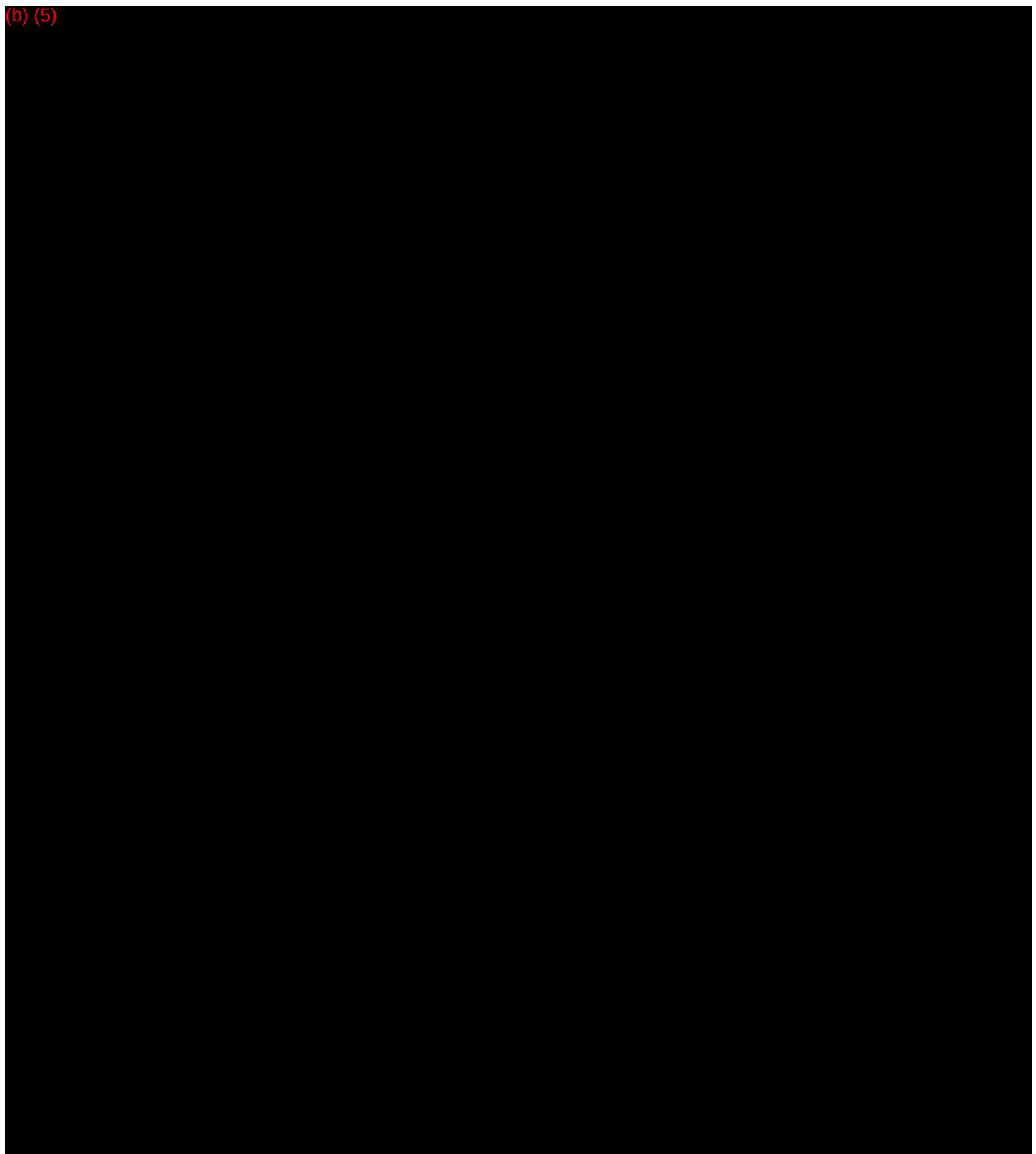
From: Sam Dewey (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, August 28, 2020 5:42 PM
To: Elez Biberaj (b) (6); Kelu Chao (b) (6)
(b) (6); David Kotz (b) (6)
Cc: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6)
Subject: URGENT VOA ISSUE
Importance: High

All:

(b) (5)



(b) (5)



Best,

Sam

From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: URGENT VOA ISSUE
Date: Friday, August 28, 2020 5:41:55 PM
Importance: High

FYSA

From: Sam Dewey

Sent: Friday, August 28, 2020 5:42 PM

To: Elez Biberaj (b) (6) >; Kelu Chao (b) (6)

(b) (6) David Kotz (b) (6)

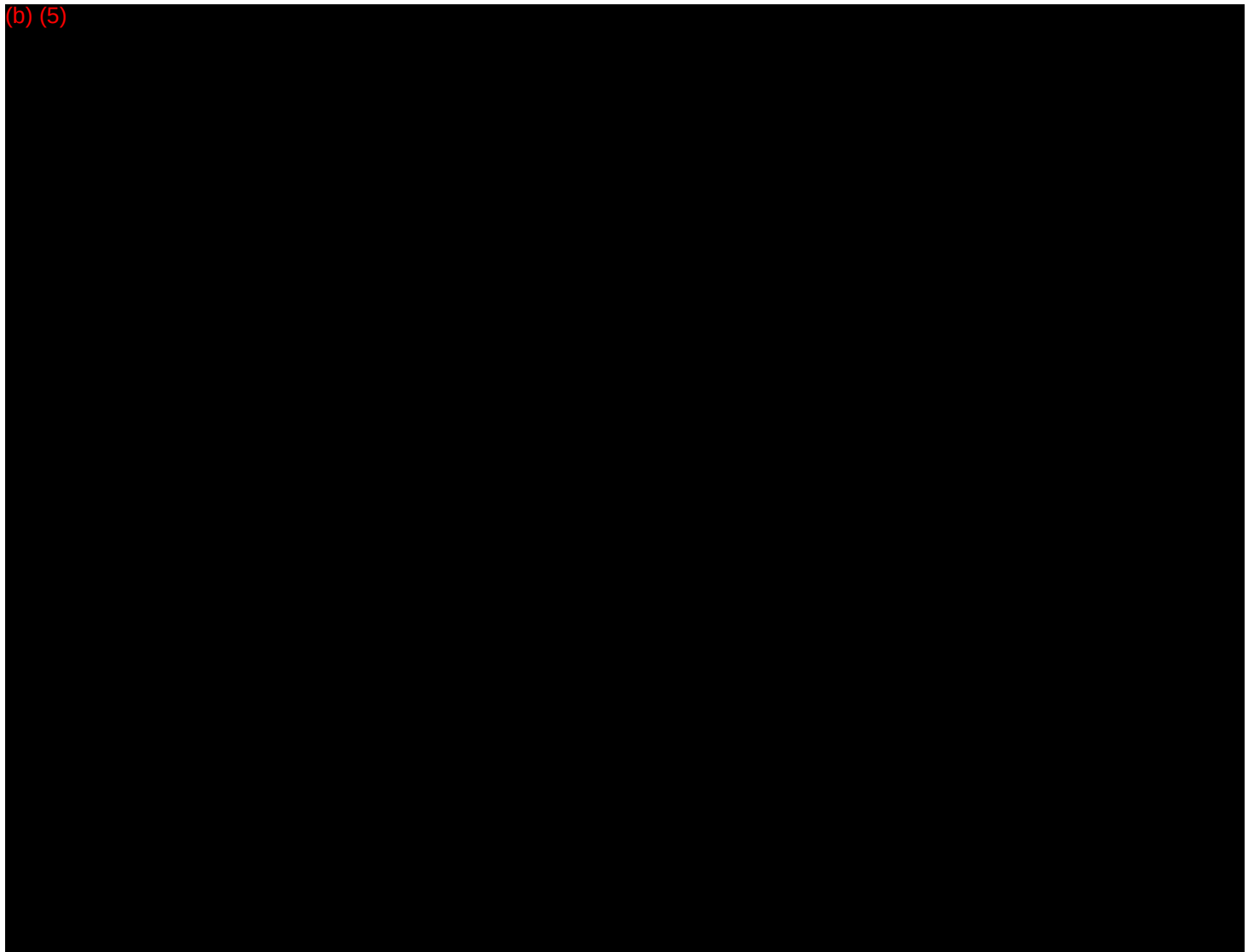
Cc: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6)

Subject: URGENT VOA ISSUE

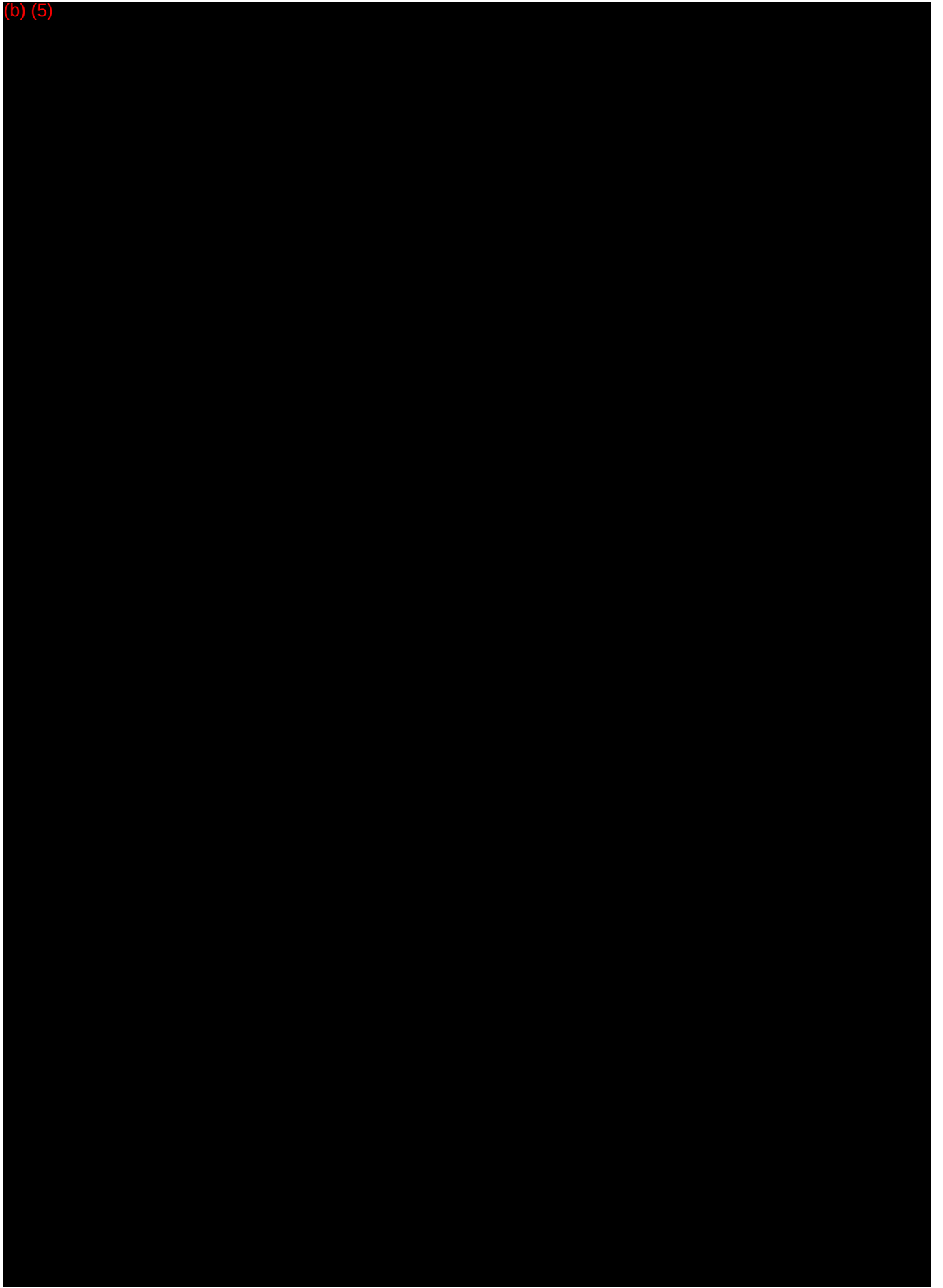
Importance: High

All:

(b) (5)



(b) (5)



(b) (5)



Best,

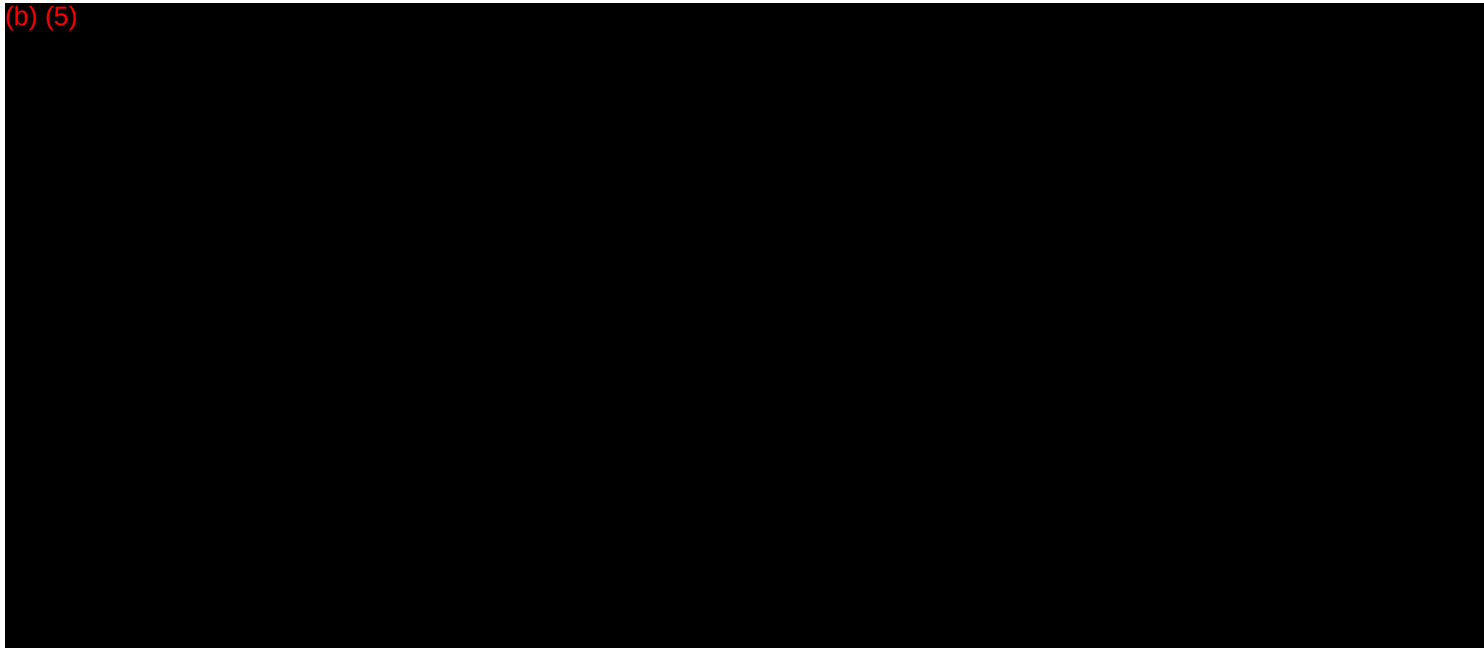
Sam

From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: URGENT VOA ISSUE
Date: Saturday, August 29, 2020 4:42:10 PM
Importance: High

FYSA

From: Sam Dewey
Sent: Saturday, August 29, 2020 4:34 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6);
David Kotz (b) (6); Kelu Chao (b) (6); Elez Biberaj
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: URGENT VOA ISSUE
Importance: High
(b) (6) et al:

(b) (5)



Thanks!

Sam

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Friday, August 28, 2020 9:14 PM

To: Sam Dewey (b) (6)

Cc: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6);
David Kotz (b) (6); Kelu Chao (b) (6); Elez Biberaj

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Subject: RE: URGENT VOA ISSUE

Hello Sam,

Good to e-meet you. I'm the VOA Deputy for Programming. Thanks very much for bringing this to our attention. We hate these violations of journalistic ethics. They are a big deal to us. In the year and a half the PSC program has been in effect, our group has handled PSC disciplinary issues consistently and firmly, in concert with the VOA News Standards Editor. As per with our procedures in a case like this, we have taken down the material in question and begun our investigation. We will be interviewing those involved and taking appropriate action.

(b) (6)'s visa expires tonight at midnight, and (b) (6) was already being removed from the system. We accelerated that process when we learned of the issue.

Thanks again for your email. We're on the same page and agree that it should be dealt with swiftly and decisively.

All the best,

(b) (6)

VOA

(b) (6)

(o)

(m)

From: Sam Dewey (b) (6)

Sent: Friday, August 28, 2020 5:42 PM

To: Elez Biberaj (b) (6); Kelu Chao (b) (6)

(b) (6)

; David Kotz (b) (6)

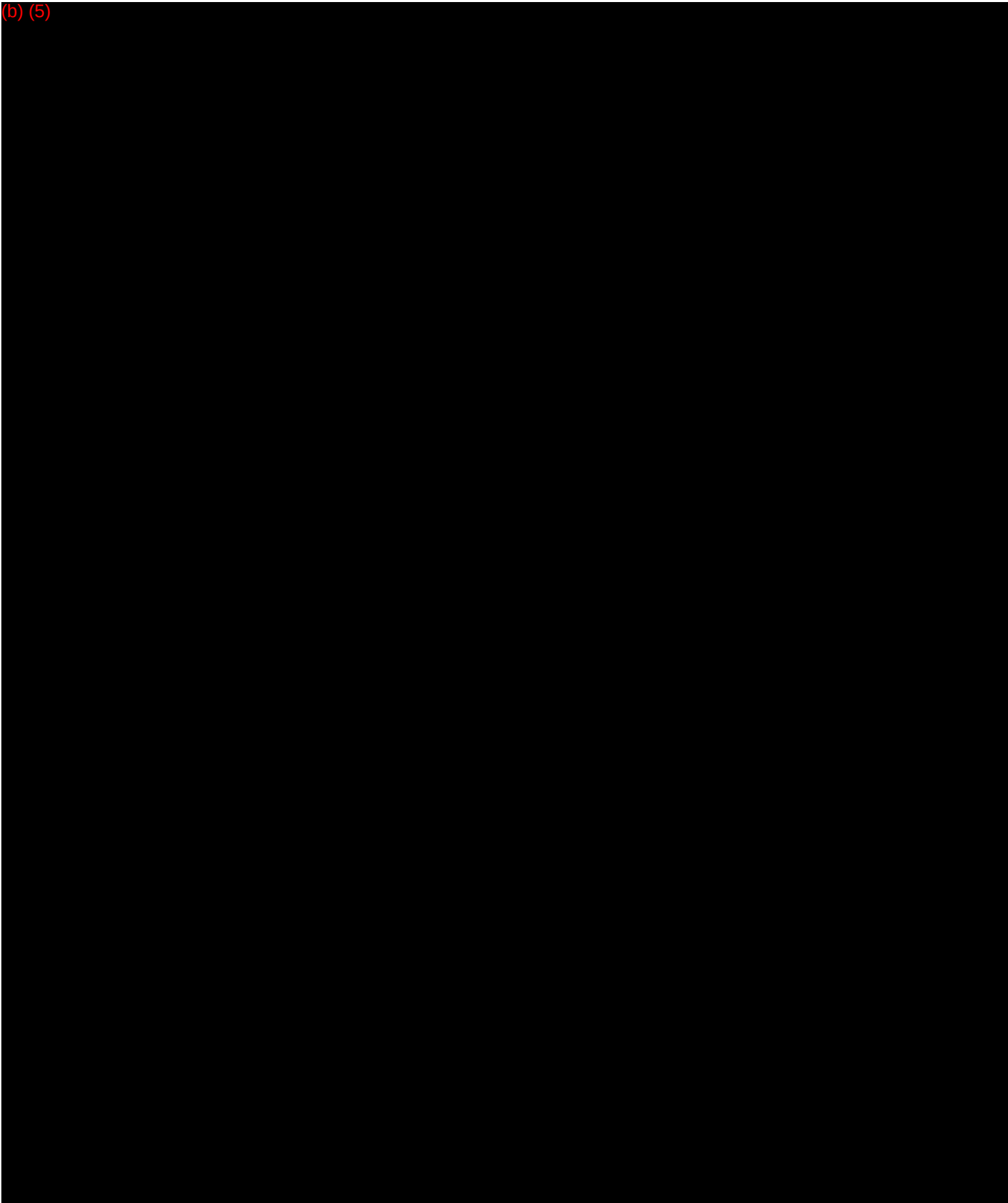
Cc: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6)

Subject: URGENT VOA ISSUE

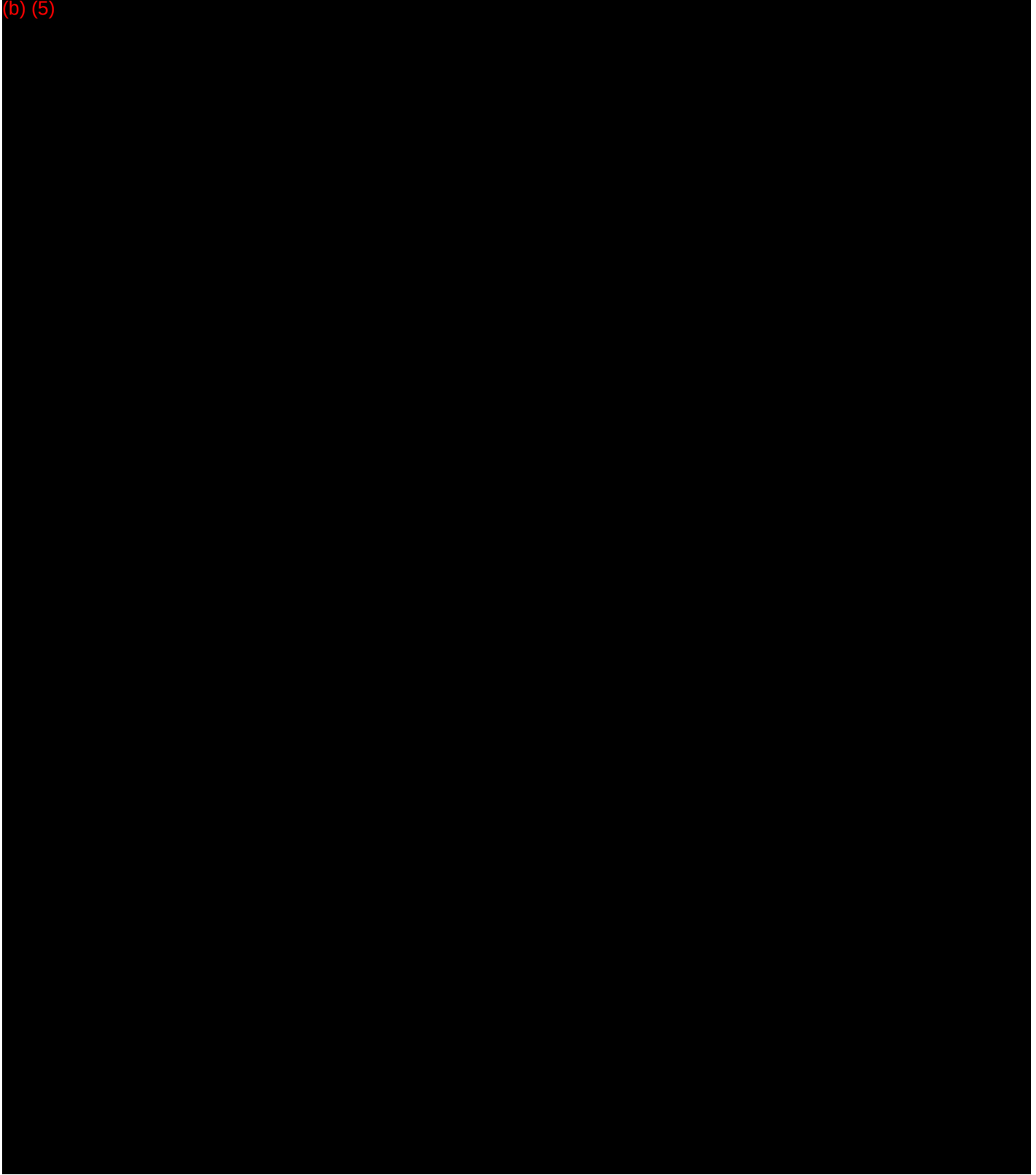
Importance: High

All:

(b) (5)



(b) (5)



Best,

Sam

From: [Andre Mendes](#)
To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Michael Pack](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Michael B. Williams](#); [Diane Cullo](#)
Subject: FW: USAGM, VOA and OCB Freeze Info
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 6:58:43 AM
Attachments: [Critical Requirements ALL 6.15.20.xlsx](#)
[Critical Requirements JUNE ONLY.xlsx](#)
[Technical Migrations Summary June 2020.docx](#)
[Critical HR Actions.msg](#)

Hi Emily:

Here is the full set of lists.

I am familiar with the overwhelming majority of it and asked for details on 4 items that I did not recognize.

Regarding the blanket approval for Content distribution expenses, it was part of my report at the Staff Meeting on Friday.

Disrupting the global content distribution network (satellites, FMs, SW, MW, etc.) is nothing we can afford to do and my confidence level in Terry Balazs and the TSI organization could not be any higher. He was my deputy for 8 years and I trust him implicitly.

I authorized the ones that were "Friday Critical" and held the other ones until this AM.

Be glad to discuss any of them when you get in.

Also, as mentioned at the staff meeting, we need to make sure that the Grantee agreements for RFA and MBN are signed today. The Agency keeps them on a very short leash on funds.

Best,

André

From: Matthew Walsh (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2020 3:40 PM
To: Andre Mendes (b) (6)
Cc: Matthew Walsh (b) (6); Marie Lennon (b) (6); Terry Balazs (b) (6); Grant Turner (b) (6); Shawn Powers (b) (6)
Subject: USAGM, VOA and OCB Freeze Info

Andre,

Attaching all of the federal-side data related to the requested HR, contracting, and technical freezes. Short explainers; happy to walk through any of this on the phone or in person:

- 1) **HR:** See the attached e-mail to Emily/Diane from earlier this week re: all of the HR info. Sending this to you as well in case you want to take a look; we have not discussed yet with Emily or Diane. CCing Marie, as she and her team pulled this together.
- 2) **Contracting:** Two spreadsheets that lay out all of the contracting info. “Critical Requirements ALL” is a pivot table that simply includes all contracting actions in the pipeline between this week and the end of the current FY. This is just listed alphabetically and not arranged at all by priority. “Critical Requirements JUNE ONLY” includes just those contracts coming up for payment/obligation this month, organized by week. There are some items that are time sensitive. I think after you take a look it might be easiest if Marie took the lead in walking you through the most critical items (her Contracting team pulled this together). I pasted instructions at the bottom of this e-mail on how to navigate the pivot tables in case anyone needs that.
- 3) **Technical Migrations:** The attached Word doc “Technical Migrations Summary June 2020” is pretty self-explanatory. Simply, it’s the four major production/distribution tech “migrations” that are underway. Pulled together by TSI (Terry, J.R. (CIO), and Barbara) with input from (b) (CTO) as well.

Cheers, Matt

Pivot Table Instructions:

1. Open spreadsheet to see a summary sheet showing monthly requirements by entity.
2. Click “+” under entity name to access a detailed list of critical contracts by office.
3. Double-click the amount next to any contract name/function to access a full description of the contract you would like to view.
4. To see a listing of all requirements with full details, click the “critical requirements detail” tab.

Subject: FW: USAGM
Date: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 5:52:09 PM
Attachments: [OPM SuitEA - July 2020.pdf](#)
[USAGM - security one-pager.docx](#)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: USAGM: gross misquoting of CEO Pack
Date: Thursday, September 3, 2020 11:34:00 AM

Hi Jonathan,

The interview sounds like a go! The guy to work with is (b) (6) -- head of Communications at (b) (6)

He's a great interviewer and I am sure both you and Pack know him.

I will stay in the loop to help with questions.

All the best,

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, September 3, 2020 11:27 AM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6); Gonzalez, Michael
(b) (6)
Subject: Re: USAGM: gross misquoting of CEO Pack

Thank you, (b) (6). I think that's a wonderful idea.

I think you should do the interview, and I will be happy to suggest questions.

Does this sound good, (b) (6) and (b) (6)?

Best, (b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, September 3, 2020 11:12 AM
To: (b) (6)

Subject: Re: USAGM: gross misquoting of CEO Pack

I wholeheartedly support the idea. If you'd like to do the interview for The Daily Signal Podcast, I'm sure we could make it happen. Or I can do it and consult with you on questions. Please let me know if you have a preference.

(b) (6)

Vice President, Communications and Executive Editor, The Daily Signal

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)

Date: Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 11:07 AM

To: (b) (6)

Subject: Fw: USAGM: gross misquoting of CEO Pack

Hi (b) (6),

I should have cc'd you on this email. Let me know what you think.

All the best,

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Thursday, September 3, 2020 11:06 AM

To: (b) (6)

(b) (6)

Subject: Re: USAGM: gross misquoting of CEO Pack

Greetings all,

I am working on countering allegations made against Michael Pack as he is trying to deal with major issues within USAGM. The Federalist did an interview with Pack.

It is quite innocuous, but is being badly misconstrued in the media. Would it be an idea to have Pack to a podcast with the Daily Signal to set the record straight?

His remarks are below. He is accused of making jokes about putting employees at risk for COVID which is in no way what he said.

All the best, (b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 1:11 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Re: USAGM: gross misquoting of CEO Pack

Awesome! Thank you!

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 11:20:32 AM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: RE: USAGM: gross misquoting of CEO Pack

ISSUES PRIOR TO PACK'S TENURE

- [Former Chair](#) (2012): "The Broadcasting Board of Governors is structurally a mess."
- [Then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton](#) (2013): "Our Broadcasting Board of Governors is practically defunct in terms of its capacity to be able to tell a message around the world."
- [Washington Post](#) (2014): "When it comes to employee morale in federal agencies, the Broadcasting Board of Governors has long lived among the dregs. It's still there, but the BBG is trying hard to move to a better neighborhood. This isn't a success story, at least not yet."
- [Foreign Policy](#) (2014): "Not even a year after its last scandal, the U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) is accused of wasting taxpayer money — again. The State Department and BBG's inspector general revealed mismanagement and abuse of power in a new audit released Tuesday."
- [RFE/RL](#) (2016): "U.S. President Barack Obama has approved legislation that would consolidate oversight of U.S. nonmilitary broadcasting in the hands of a single chief executive, an overhaul that supporters laud as a much-needed reform..."
- [New York Times](#) (2018): "The American government's broadcast service to the world has a problem: It is becoming the news itself.... Voice of America, the flagship of American government efforts to promote its values abroad, was rocked in October when 15 of its journalists were fired or disciplined after an internal investigation found they accepted 'brown envelopes,' or bribes passed to them by a Nigerian official."

- [Hill](#) (2018): “But the hyperbole surrounding Trump’s choice to be the BBG’s first confirmed chief executive officer (CEO) is a distraction from the agency’s more fundamental problems. Since inception, the BBG has been plagued by dysfunction and poor management...”
- [New York Times](#) (2019): “The United States Agency for Global Media, the government’s foreign broadcast service, already struggling to clean house after a series of scandals last year at flagship operations like Voice of America and TV Martí, is now being rocked by two new cases that have raised further questions about its journalistic and financial management.”
- [Wall Street Journal](#) (2019): “Federal officials are scrutinizing the U.S. government’s Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty news service, established to promote democratic values abroad, after complaints it has distributed foreign propaganda favorable to authoritarian regimes in Central Asia, according to the network, its employees and an internal State Department memo.”
- [BBG Watch](#) (2019): “After the earlier firing of VOA Mandarin Service chief Dr. Sasha Gong, a senior USAGM manager, who is an accountant by training and reports to USAGM CEO John Lansing as his Acting Deputy Director, informed this week two other ‘VOA Mandarin 5’ journalists, who have been suspended with pay since May 2017, that they would be removed from Federal employment effective May 17, 2019.”
- [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (2019): “An Alexandria man pleaded guilty today to stealing over \$40,000 in government money during 2018, while he was employed as a senior government official at the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) in Washington, D.C. According to court documents, Haroon K. Ullah, 41, admitted that he fraudulently obtained thousands of dollars in government funds by submitting falsified hotel invoices, falsified and inflated taxi and Uber receipts, and by billing the government for personal travel and for travel that had already been paid by third parties.”
- [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (2020): “A former contracting officer with the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) (now known as the U.S. Agency for Global Media) pleaded guilty today to conspiring to engage in a bribery scheme.”

These myriad issues prompted Congress to pass bipartisan legislation that President Obama signed into law in 2016, which changed the agency’s leadership structure from a part-time, nine-member board to a single executive. Pack took office in June, becoming the agency’s first presidentially-appointed, Senate-confirmed CEO.

ISSUES EXPOSED DURING PACK’S TENURE

- [Newsweek](#) (09.02.20): “Recent articles on the dust-up between the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) and its grantee, the Open Technology Fund (OTF), make it sound like the U.S. government’s support for promoting international internet openness and access is at critical risk. But new documents show that the dispute is really over budgets, accountability and transparency, not a struggle over the future of internet freedom.”
- [Washington Post](#) (08.26.20): “For the last eight years, the U.S. taxpayer-funded Voice of America in the \$800 million federal U.S. Agency for Global Media has lost control of one of its official websites. The agency’s government executives appointed during the Obama

administration had no idea that Russian hackers were posting vile, anti-American propaganda under the VOA Statue of Liberty masthead and the VOA News logo.”

- [SaraACarter.com](https://www.saraacarter.com) (08.25.20): “After a review of numerous explanatory political videos describing America’s history and political system, as well as stories regarding the 2020 election, [SaraACarter.com](https://www.saraacarter.com) has found not only historical inaccuracies but continued themes suggesting the Democratic Party is the most equitable party. The assessment was based on a review of the videos, interviews and complaints from U.S. government employees who spoke to this reporter and a well-known presidential historian, who also reviewed the news network’s videos.”
- [Newsweek](https://www.newsweek.com) (08.10.20): “Nearly 40 percent of USAGM's 4,000 employees have reportedly not been fully vetted. This is unsurprising, given that the OPM report highlighted how USAGM had failed to act on more than half of OPM's 37 recommendations to shore up USAGM's security processes and bring it into compliance with the law. These failures came under holdover leadership handpicked by President Barack Obama—leadership that remained in place until June 2020, when Senate Republicans finally overcame Democrats' stonewalling to confirm Mr. Pack as USAGM CEO.”
- [SaraACarter.com](https://www.saraacarter.com) (07.27.20): “Voice of America posted what appears to be a political campaign ad on at least one of its social media platform last week, asking the Muslim community both in the United States and abroad to support Democratic Presidential Candidate Joe Biden.”

ACTIONS TAKEN UNDER PACK

- USAGM (08.18.20): [Revives USAGM’s Office of Internet Freedom; agency funds internet firewall circumvention technologies](#)
- USAGM (08.04.20): [Releases OPM report detailing long-standing USAGM security failures](#)
- USAGM (07.30.20): [Launches investigation into pro-Biden VOA content, U.S. election interference](#)
- USAGM (07.23.20): [Announces investigation into long-term security failures](#)
- USAGM (06.24.20): [Moves to restore VOA Editorials to former prominence](#)
- USAGM (06.18.20): [Implements critical changes on Day One to fulfill legislative mandate](#)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 10:17 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Re: USAGM: gross misquoting of CEO Pack

Hi Jonathan,

I saw the story and would love a chance to talk to Michael about it. Maybe I could interview him or the Heritage Foundation could do a podcast.

I am working on an article about the executive changes made by Michael. Is there a chance you could give me a list of the most important decisions he has made?

Best, (b) (6)

(b) (6)

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 11:46 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: USAGM: gross misquoting of CEO Pack

Helle,

USAGM would like to push back against these malicious distortions of Michael's [appearance](#) on *The Federalist Radio Hour*. Either these journalists didn't bother to listen to the podcast, or they simply don't care to accurately relay the exchange and its context to their readers and listeners.

Thanks so much for your time and support.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

=====

https://www.cjr.org/the_media_today/voice-of-america-staff-rebel-over-new-ceos-comments.php

As NPR's [David Folkenflik reported](#), the comments in question came during a podcast produced by the conservative website The Federalist, and included Pack [saying the agency was](#) "a great place to put a foreign spy," as well as joking about deporting his own employees and turning off the air conditioning or banning masks at VOA headquarters in order to help him "drain the swamp."

<https://www.npr.org/2020/08/31/907764105/voice-of-america-journalists-new-ceo-endangers-reporters-harms-u-s-aims>

During the half-hour conversation, Pack joked with The Federalist's host, senior editor Chris Bedford, about deporting his own employees and forcing them to adopt unsafe workplace practices that could expose them to COVID-19. Pack said the agency was ripe for espionage and possibly rife with spies.

=====

Chris asked Michael to outline the personnel composition of USAGM:

MP: “One of the challenges of taking over an agency at this moment in time is sorting all this out, especially during COVID. The headquarters building – the Cohen Building here in Washington, DC – is largely empty. We’re bringing people back as we move from Phase I...”

CB: [INTERJECTION] “Have you considered banning masks and turning off the air conditioning? That’s my prescription for federal agencies.”

MP: [SEGUE] “Yeah, well, we’ll have to look into that one. But you know it’s been hard to get to know the employees when they’re largely working from home. But there are about 4,000 over all the broadcasters, so it’s a lot of people and their backgrounds are mixed. I’ve met some really great ones and some very passionate ones. And people who still, for instance on the China example, are deeply upset about the country getting worse and worse and want to do something about it and want to get the truth to their fellow countrymen who are living under this kind of oppression. It’s a noble thing, and there are journalists who are risking their lives who are working for us. We have journalists in Hong Kong that were threatened, and they’re threatened all the time. There are a lot of journalists who are heroically motivated by a desire to get the truth to these areas, and I think they need to be celebrated. I don’t want to downplay that, and they’re heroic.”

Chris asked Michael about USAGM’s security situation:

MP: “I have a responsibility to make sure that the security of these agencies is maintained. The fact is that foreign intelligence agencies from the beginning – from the creation of these agencies – have been interested in penetrating them. To be a journalist is a great cover for a spy – famous journalists like Kim Philby who worked for the BBC... It’s just a great cover. And from the beginning of the Cold War, even earlier, they’ve been penetrated. It [the field of journalism] is a great place to put a foreign spy. I have to make sure that doesn’t happen – to stand up for the national security interests of Americans.”

Re “joking about deporting his own employees”:

MP: “We are doing everything we can to cure this as quickly as we can, and part of

that is we have J-1 visas for some foreign journalists that we are supposed to approve yearly. We have been rubberstamping them and not putting them through an approval process. But I'm legally obligated to do that. So I can't just give – even if they're lovely people – a J-1 visa without going through the process, or I'd be potentially endangering the security of America. So I am anxious to fix this as quickly as I can. I feel this was a mess dumped on me by senior management over a long period of time. I was not told about it during my long wait for confirmation or even the two months I was there by existing staff. It's a huge problem – I'm working hard to fix it.”

Subject: FW: USAGM: rollout
Date: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 1:12:14 PM
Attachments: [Comms - security - draft.docx](#)
[Messaging - security - draft.docx](#)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:52 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); CEO2016 (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6); Diane Cullo (b) (6)
Subject: RE: USAGM: rollout

Thanks for sending. Think this is a good start! Attached are my edits and thoughts.

Coms plan: I think the biggest thing we need to nail down is can we still give one exclusive to a solid hard news outlet that makes sense, then let all our friendlies (many you've listed) follow shortly thereafter. Basically, what has been promised to who, and what have they told us they were going to do, then we can sequence it out a bit further and figure out where the gaps are. If we've already promised them all the first bite at the apple, who is actually going to write about it and can we splice up what they write. I'd like to drill a bit more into that.

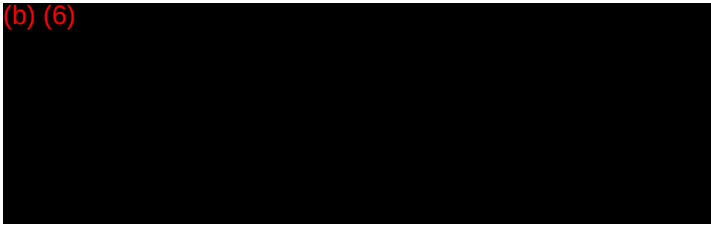
Messaging: I added more punchy stuff that I think reporters will want. Feel free to reformat it. I didn't organize it much. I think you need to add a What's next? Section. Actions your taking. Need to look transparent, aggressive and like you have a plan.

Also add to this document any on record statement you plan to give when inquiries come in. I would honestly give this doc as background to all reporters.

Timeline: looks good.

Am glad to send thoughts on the next round of edits. Will be in a posture of waiting for you to tell me which of these aspects I can execute for you on rollout.

(b) (6)



From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:24 AM
To: CEO2016 (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6); Diane

Cullo (b) (6)

Subject: USAGM: rollout

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-

Please find attached a draft timeline, comms plan, and messaging one-pager.

JB

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: FW: USAGM: rollout
Date: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 1:17:00 PM
Attachments: [Comms - security - draft.docx](#)
[Messaging - security - draft.docx](#)

Toni, I'm forwarding this message as well, just in case the attachments didn't go through previously.

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:52 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); CEO2016 (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6); Diane Cullo (b) (6)
Subject: RE: USAGM: rollout

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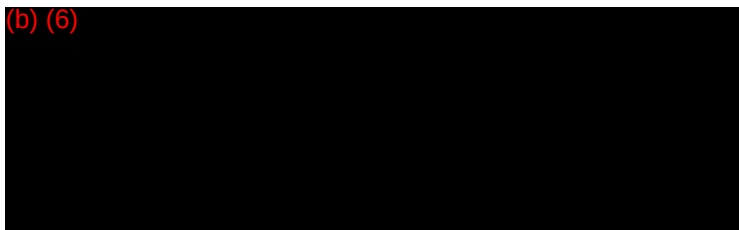
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(b) (6)



From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)

Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:24 AM

To: CEO2016 (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6); Diane Cullo (b) (6)

Subject: USAGM: rollout

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-

Please find attached a draft timeline, comms plan, and messaging one-pager.

JB

Subject: FW: USAGM: rollout
Date: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 1:17:28 PM
Attachments: [Comms - security - draft.docx](#)
[Messaging - security - draft.docx](#)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:52 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); CEO2016 (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6); Diane Cullo (b) (6)
Subject: RE: USAGM: rollout

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(b) (6)
Director of Communications
The White House, Office of Management and Budget
(b) (6) work
cell (Cannot receive text)

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:24 AM
To: CEO2016 (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6); Diane

Cullo (b) (6)

Subject: USAGM: rollout

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-

Please find attached a draft timeline, comms plan, and messaging one-pager.

JB

From: [Diane Cullo](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: FW: WaPo Article
Date: Thursday, September 17, 2020 10:14:01 AM

How about a positive OIF release on this? We can discuss... Could you draft? Available via phone.

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2020 9:25 AM
To: Diane Cullo (b) (6)
Cc: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); Toni DeLancey (b) (6); (b) (6)
Subject: WaPo Article

Hello all, forwarding the text of the WaPo article in case you need it.
thanks,

(b) (6)

USAGM Public Affairs

[Western journalists are getting squeezed out of China by superpower tensions](#)

Washington Post
September 16, 2020
Paul Farhi

Starting this week, The Washington Post will no longer have a correspondent in China, the first time in 40 years that it hasn't had a full-time reporter covering the world's most-populous country.

Like many Western news organizations, The Post has been caught in the middle of tensions between two superpowers that is already limiting the flow of independent news and information from the country at a critical time. Chinese officials have for months declined to accredit a new Post correspondent to replace Beijing bureau chief, [Anna Fifield](#), who voluntarily left the country on Tuesday to return to her native New Zealand for a new job.

At the same time, the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg News — all major sources of news from China — have lost correspondents, too, with no prospect that China will permit replacements. Australian news outlets no longer have any correspondents in the country after [the last two were driven out](#) by Chinese officials earlier this month.

This looming news vacuum appears to be the result of strife between China and Western countries, especially the United States, over issues including trade, China's [crackdown on Hong Kong's](#) independence, and [human-rights violations](#) against the Muslim Uighur minority in China's Xinjiang province. The tensions have been exacerbated by the global [coronavirus](#) pandemic, which first emerged in a Chinese province last year.

Although China has maintained a close watch over non-Chinese reporters for decades, its actions since the spring have created some of the most confining conditions since the late 1970s, when American reporters began to return to China after being barred by its communist government. Beijing expelled [three Wall Street Journal reporters](#) in February, the first time since Mao Zedong's rule that multiple foreign journalists were kicked out at once. In March, it [designated five American news organizations](#) — The Post, Times, Journal, Time magazine and **Voice of America** — as “foreign missions” that must report to the government about their staffs, finances and operations in China. It also said journalists from those three American newspapers must leave the country when their visas expire this year.

[Wall Street Journal reporters protest 'sick man' headline in Wall Street Journal](#)

The announcement was in retaliation for [the Trump administration's decision](#) to designate five state-run Chinese media organizations in the United States as foreign missions. It later ordered [the expulsion of dozens](#) of their employees.

The hostile climate elicited an unusual joint plea from the publishers of The Post, the Times and Journal. [In an open letter](#) to the Chinese government that ran as a full-page ad in all three newspapers in March, they asked Beijing to “ease the growing crackdown on independent news organizations.”

The upshot of this worsening climate, of course, has been diminished coverage of China as the world grapples with the pandemic's catastrophic impact.

“From a Chinese perspective, they would just as soon be done with” American journalists, said Orville Schell, a leading China scholar for more than 50 years. “They don't mind [financial reporters], because economic news is important to China, but they'd like to get rid of all the rest. They consider them troublemakers who are besmirching China.”

Added Schell, “I think we're in a really alarmingly dangerous state of free fall [between the Chinese and U.S. governments], with no road map to arrest the downward spiral.”

The increasing uncertainty over Chinese rule in Hong Kong prompted the New York Times to [announce in July](#) that it would relocate its Hong Kong-based digital news operations to Seoul by next year. As a British colony for decades, Hong Kong developed into a hub for Western news reporting on China. But that has been threatened by China's drive to limit Hong Kong's autonomy, including the enactment of a sweeping [new “security” law](#) in June that targets pro-democracy factions.

Chinese officials have refused to renew a work permit for Chris Buckley, the Times's veteran China correspondent, prompting him to leave the mainland in May. Buckley has documented a number of stories that have angered government officials and made him the target of [criticism in China's state-run media](#), including China's mistreatment of Muslims and the [government's bungled early response](#) to the coronavirus outbreak.

The Times still has two correspondents in Beijing and is “hopeful over time that we will be able to get our entire reporting staff back,” said Michael Slackman, the Times's assistant managing editor for international news. Yet “we are clearly struggling to figure out how best to cover China when access is such a problem. But as you can see from our report we are continuing to try to cover the most important political, social and economic stories of the day. Of course, it would be a lot easier if more of our correspondents were permitted to live and work in China again.”

The departure of Fifield has left The Post to cover China from afar, although its Beijing bureau will continue under two full-time Chinese researchers. Correspondent [Gerry Shih](#) was effectively

expelled from China in March; a new correspondent, [Eva Dou](#), has been unable to gain accreditation since March, nominally as a result of coronavirus restrictions. Despite the restrictions, The Post's foreign editor, Douglas Jehl, said the news organization "will continue to vigorously cover China and its relations with the U.S."

Spokespeople for the Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg News declined to comment.

The two Australian journalists, Bill Birtles of the Australian Broadcasting Corp. and Michael Smith of the Australian Financial Review, hastily departed from China earlier this month after Chinese officials questioned them. Authorities asked them about their association with Cheng Lei, a Chinese-born Australian who serves as a news anchor for Chinese state broadcaster CGTN. She was detained on Aug. 14 for reasons that remain unclear.

The reporters spent four days holed up in the Australian Embassy in Beijing and the consulate in Shanghai while diplomats negotiated their departure. They were finally cleared to leave, eliminating the last Australian reporters in the country.

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of China denounced what it called the use of "foreign journalists as pawns in wider diplomatic disputes. ... Such actions by the Chinese government amount to appalling intimidatory tactics that threaten and seek to curtail the work of foreign journalists based in China, who now face the threat of arbitrary detention for simply doing their work, and difficult circumstances that make it untenable to remain in the country."

From: Jonathan Bronitsky
To: Sam Dewey
Subject: Fwd: Amanda Bennett's farewell email and accomplishments
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 12:14:00 PM
Attachments: [Bennett Sugawara VOA Resignation 6-15-20.pdf](#)
[VOA 2016-2020 \(6-15-20\).pdf](#)

From: Michael Pack (b) (6)
Sent: Saturday, July 25, 2020 10:54:59 AM
To: Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6); Diane Cullor (b) (6); Morvared Namdarkhan (b) (6); Andre Mendes (b) (6); Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Cc: CEO2016 (b) (6)
Subject: Amanda Bennett's farewell email and accomplishments

I somehow missed this email when it came in; it was in the wrong folder I thought you might all find it interesting

Best,
Michael

Begin forwarded message:

From: Amanda Bennett (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: RESIGNATION – COPY
Date: June 15, 2020 at 9:28:45 AM EDT
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Sandy Sugawara (b) (6)

FYI

From: Amanda Bennett
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2020 8:19 AM
To: Michael Pack (b) (6)
Cc: Sandy Sugawara (b) (6)
Subject: RESIGNATION

Dear Michael:

Attached please find a resignation letter for Director Amanda Bennett and Deputy Director Sandy Sugawara. It is effective for close of business Tuesday to give us time to wrap up with our teams and to clear our personal effects from our offices.

We are also sharing with you a document with our accomplishments over the past four years. At the end of the document are links to a sampling of VOA's work that we hope you will enjoy. We also hope you will be as impressed as we are at the hard work and dedication of the VOA staff that led to these changes.

We wish you all the best

Amanda and Sandy

Michael Pack

(b) (6)

From: [André Mendes](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Fwd: article
Date: Thursday, July 16, 2020 9:38:43 AM

Sasha submitted this to the Examiner i believe.

Best,

Andre

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 9:33:22 AM
To: André Mendes (b) (6)
Subject: article

Repivoting US Broadcasting to China Should be Top Priority for USAGM

By Sasha Gong, PhD. Former Chief, China Branch, Voice of America

Huchen Zhang, Senior Editor, Voice of America

In his interview with the Washington Times on July 6, Mr. Michael Pack, the new CEO of the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), said broadcasting into [China](#) and about [China](#) will be a very high priority. “The Chinese people need information. They need the truth,” he said.

As veteran journalists who have engaged in U.S. broadcasting to China for decades, we salute Mr. Pack’s strategic vision—a vision that was sadly not shared by the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), the predecessor of the USAGM. In fact, for more than a decade, the BBG has tried every way to destroy America’s voice to the Chinese people in its miserable and failed attempt to please the Chinese authorities to obtain a share in the vast China market.

In early 2011, in a move dubbed by VOA China Branch employees as the “Valentine’s Day Massacre”, the BBG proposed to eliminate Voice of America’s Mandarin and Cantonese broadcasts to China. That included all radio and TV programming, and meant a deduction of 59% of VOA China’s Branch’s annual budget and a 65% deduction of its manpower. What would be left was only the internet service which was totally blocked by the Chinese government. Thanks to Congress, the proposal was rejected.

Despite Congressional mandate that VOA’s broadcasting to China be preserved, BBG weakened it over the years bit by bit. Live radio shows became repeat shows. Then the “repeat shows” were cut. The number of frequencies dwindled from more than a dozen at any given hour to one or two. This makes VOA’s programming an easy target for the Chinese authorities to jam. Finding VOA’s signals in China became impossible and listening to VOA’s shows a torture because of the Chinese government’s “co-channeling”. The decrease in the number of listeners was used by BBG as an excuse for cutting China programming further. The TV shows met with similar fate, since “owning a satellite signal receiving device” is illegal and

TV satellites in Asia are mostly controlled by China.

Yet, the most obvious change happened in the area of content. In the name of “objectivity and balance”, pro-China voices were sought and injected into news reports and shows. This dismayed and alienated a great number of loyal VOA listeners and readers.

Programs that were critical of the Chinese Communist Party were eliminated one by one. Hard-hitting programs such as China Forum, History of the Chinese Communist Party, and History’s Mysteries. Instead, a large portion of the China’s Branch’s budget was ordered to put into “soft programs”, such as an English teaching program that taught its Chinese audience how to say “booger” in English.

In recent years, propaganda from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) mysteriously routinely found its way into VOA reporting. A two-minute monologue of the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman was broadcast without any factual check and balance, and false numbers from the CCP were cited in VOA’s reports to glorify Beijing’s “achievements” in controlling the COVID-19 pandemic.

Faced with increasing hostility and intimidation from Beijing, VOA top leaders choose to appease and to cave in, instead of standing up to its bullying. The most telling example happened on April 19 of 2017 when a group of journalists from VOA China Branch interviewed a Chinese billionaire who alleged corruption at the highest level of the Chinese regime. In the face of relentless PRC pressure – including threats to cancel VOA Beijing correspondent visas – VOA upper management essentially caved and cut short the live TV interview midstream, citing “journalistic ethics” as the purported reason. Three veteran journalists were fired and another suspended.

It has become a bi-partisan consensus in recent years that China is the most serious adversary that our country faces. As pointed out by the new *National Security Strategy* (December 2017), “China is using economic inducements and penalties, influence operations, and implied military threats to persuade other states to heed its political and security agenda.” (P.46)

In his interview with the Washington Times, Mr. Pack remarked “I agree with the assessment that [China](#) is our biggest threat in the future.” We are pleased with Mr. Pack’s clear understanding. Faced with Beijing’s ever-increasing disinformation campaign and information warfare, it is high time that America stands up to this challenge and win the war of ideas. VOA’s broadcasting to China has become the front line of this battleground.

To effectively enhance America’s broadcasts to China, the new VOA leadership must provide laser-focus direction and effective leadership to the China broadcasting journalists. Facing the most aggressive Chinese propaganda, VOA must quickly launch its counteroffensive campaign to claim the ideological high ground in the Chinese-speaking world.

VOA Chinese broadcasting influenced at least two generations in China from the 1950s to the 1990s. During the 1989 pro-democracy protest, student demonstrators broadcast VOA

programs via loudspeakers in Tiananmen Square. Millions learned about democracy, freedom, and American values through VOA. In the past two decades, the strengthened Chinese propaganda, coinciding with the weakening of the VOA Chinese broadcasting by the BBG bureaucracy, took away the once great American soft power. It is time for us to reclaim it.

--

Twitter: (b) (6)

From: [Michael Pack](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: Fwd: COMMENT ON USC FINDING
Date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 7:06:08 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: David Folkenflik (b) (6)
Date: December 2, 2020 at 6:17:49 PM EST
To: Diane Cullo (b) (6), Public Affairs
(b) (6)
Cc: Michael Pack (b) (6)
Subject: COMMENT ON USC FINDING

Diane:

The office of special counsel has found a "Substantial likelihood of wrongdoing" at USAGM since June 20 and ordered Michael Pack to initiate an investigation of alleged firewall violations, gross mismanagement, werongful withholding of visa extensions and more.

What's Michael's comment? Unless you can promise to offer comment and ask for a delay, I am likely to post within the hour.

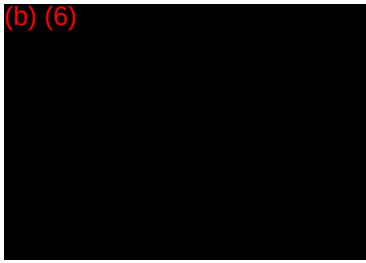
As ever, I would prefer to speak directly to Michael.

Thank you.

DBF

David Folkenflik
Media Correspondent
NPR NEWS

(b) (6)



From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Sam Dewey](#)
Subject: Fwd: Coverage of USAGM
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2020 11:16:18 PM

From: Emily Kopp (b) (6)
Sent: Sunday, September 6, 2020 10:15:27 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Cc: David Folkenflik (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Coverage of USAGM

Hi Jonathan,
Thanks again for the conversation and your detailed note. We've weighed the points you raised and have evaluated them seriously.

We do not believe any retraction is warranted and we stand by our reporting.

We would have liked to have had the opportunity to speak to you and senior officials on the record about such matters. The best way for Michael Pack's points to get across to our audiences is for him to speak on the record to David Folkenflik/NPR. And we look forward to that happening in the future.

Thanks,
Emily

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, September 04, 2020 10:00 AM
To: Emily Kopp (b) (6)
Cc: David Folkenflik (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Coverage of USAGM

Good morning, Emily.

Understood – thank you for the note.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

From: Emily Kopp (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, September 4, 2020 9:56 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); David Folkenflik (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Coverage of USAGM

Hi Jonathan,

Thanks for the detailed note, and the conversation yesterday. We're sending this through the proper channels at NPR and will get back to you as soon as possible.

Thanks,
Emily

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, September 03, 2020 11:43 AM
To: Emily Kopp (b) (6); David Folkenflik (b) (6)
Subject: Coverage of USAGM

Ms. Kopp and Mr. Folkenflik:

The following is off the record, except where otherwise specifically stated, with the intent to settle this matter.

USAGM has a number of concerns regarding two of NPR's recent reports. These concerns require retraction of much of the reports. They are of and concerning Michael Pack and Sam Dewey; are false as to material fact as to both; in no way constitute fair comment; tend to bring Mr. Pack and Mr. Dewey into hatred, ridicule, and contempt as to their professional conduct; and appear to be made with actual malice.

Voice of America Journalists: New CEO Endangers Reporters, Harms U.S. Aims (August 31, 2020)

- NPR wrote, "During the half-hour conversation, [Pack joked with The Federalist's host, senior editor Chris Bedford](#), about deporting his own employees and forcing them to adopt unsafe workplace practices that could expose them to COVID-19. Pack said the agency was ripe for espionage and possibly rife with spies." Mr. Pack did not "joke" about any of these issues. Far from it, his responses to Mr. Bedford's questions about complex and sensitive matters were reasonable, forthright, and evenhanded. NPR distorted and decontextualized his responses.
 - First, with regard to the severe and systemic security issues facing USAGM detailed in the OPM report (which NPR failed to mention, offering no context), Mr. Pack said, "We are doing everything we can to cure this as quickly as we can, and part of that is we have J-1 visas for some foreign journalists that we are supposed to approve yearly. We have been rubberstamping them and not putting them through an approval process. But I'm legally obligated to do that. So I can't just give—even if they're lovely people—a J-1 visa without going through the process, or I'd be potentially endangering the security of America. So I am anxious to fix this as quickly as I can. I feel this was a mess dumped on me by senior management over a long period of time. I was not told about it during my long wait for confirmation or even the two months I was there by existing staff. It's a huge problem—I'm working hard to fix it."
 - Second, with regard to "espionage," NPR, once again, failed to mention the severe and systemic security issues facing USAGM detailed in the OPM report that was publically

released on August 4, 2020. Mr. Pack said, “I have a responsibility to make sure that the security of these agencies is maintained. The fact is that foreign intelligence agencies from the beginning—from the creation of these agencies – have been interested in penetrating them. To be a journalist is a great cover for a spy—famous journalists like Kim Philby who worked for the BBC... It’s just a great cover. And from the beginning of the Cold War, even earlier, they’ve been penetrated. It’s a great place to put a foreign spy. I have to make sure that doesn’t happen—to stand up for the national security interests of Americans.”

- Third, with regard to COVID-19, NPR falsely attributed a comment that the podcast’s host made to Mr. Pack. The exchange follows. MP: “One of the challenges of taking over an agency at this moment in time is sorting all this out, especially during COVID. The headquarters building—the Cohen Building here in Washington, DC—is largely empty. We’re bringing people back as we move from Phase I...” CB: [INTERJECTION] “Have you considered banning masks and turning off the air conditioning? That’s my prescription for federal agencies.” MP: [SEGUE] “Yeah, well, we’ll have to look into that one. But you know it’s been hard to get to know the employees when they’re largely working from home. But there are about 4,000 over all the broadcasters, so it’s a lot of people and their backgrounds are mixed. I’ve met some really great ones and some very passionate ones. And people who still, for instance on the China example, are deeply upset about the country getting worse and worse and want to do something about it and want to get the truth to their fellow countrymen who are living under this kind of oppression. It’s a noble thing, and there are journalists who are risking their lives who are working for us. We have journalists in Hong Kong that were threatened, and they’re threatened all the time. There are a lot of journalists who are heroically motivated by a desire to get the truth to these areas, and I think they need to be celebrated. I don’t want to downplay that, and they’re heroic.”
- NPR’s disclaimer as to its CEO John Lansing’s conflict of interest is insufficient as to this particular story. Mr. Lansing is not only the former CEO of USAGM, but he was directly implicated in the security failures discussed by Mr. Pack.

[Voice of America Journalists Protest Trump Appointee’s Actions \(September 1, 2020\)](#)

Violations of “Legal Protections”

- NPR repeatedly alleged that Mr. Pack and Mr. Dewey appear to have violated “legal protections” without any context or analysis. These allegations are false and it is manifestly unreasonable to accuse U.S. Government officials of violations of legal protections without affording the opportunity to respond or comment.

VOA Urdu Video:

- NPR stated, “Sam Dewey declined comment.” The print version of the story stated that “[a]n agency spokesman, Jonathan Bronitsky, said USAGM would not reply to questions posed about this incident” — the so-called “incident” referring to the allegation that Mr. Dewey “has repeatedly pushed to participate in planning for election reporting and overarching news

coverage.” Again this is false.

- To be sure, USAGM declined to comment on inquires NPR sent to Mr. Bronitsky on August 31, 2020. But at no time in NPR’s August 31, 2020 inquiry did it seek comment on this “incident.” Had NPR sought comment on this specific point, USAGM would have provided a response consistent with the agency’s policy and past agency comments.
- But USAGM did provide a response to NPR’s inquiries of August 20, 2020 on the same subject. NPR made no mention of this response, which is directly on point. On August 20, 2020, Mr. Bronitsky responded to Mr. Folkenflik’s general questions “on background, attributable to a ‘USAGM spokesperson’” with the following comments:
 - “Re VOA Urdu: ‘The VOA Urdu content transgressed not only the VOA Charter, which is public law, but also VOA’s Best Practices Guide, VOA’s Journalistic Code, and the agency’s Standards & Principles. USAGM and VOA career officials conducted an investigation to discern who was responsible for this significant editorial review collapse to help ensure that similar breakdowns do not occur in the future. CEO Pack, who is firmly committed to carrying out long-needed reform at the agency, will continue to ensure that violations of the agency’s professional journalistic principles are dealt with swiftly and fairly in order to safeguard USAGM’s reputation and the integrity of its news and information programming, which reach a weekly global audience of over 350 million people.’”
 - “Re conventions: ‘No one in USAGM’s Office of the CEO was asked to participate in the planning of the coverage of either major party convention or the general election campaign.’”
- Mr. Folkenflik did not acknowledge receipt, let alone register an issue with the attribution. In past exchanges, he has swiftly acknowledged receipt. He then sent an email titled “following up” 11 days later on August 31, 2020 that posed far more detailed questions about the VOA Urdu investigation. Those questions involved Mr. Dewey but, this time, did not reference election coverage, which became a significant focus of his reporting. Mr. Folkenflik’s email opened: “Can we try this again? to be clear, i need as in all cases in quoting a spokesperson, to be able to attribute by name, regardless of whether I do so.” The mean of this point is entirely unclear. Mr. Bronitsky responded, “Decline to comment— per USAGM spokesperson.” Mr. Folkenflik then wrote, “Thank you, Jonathan, for your reply.”
- Mr. Folkenflik writes in his September 2, 2020 report, “An agency spokesman, Jonathan Bronitsky, said USAGM would not reply to questions posed about the Biden video and the aftermath.” Since Mr. Folkenflik used Mr. Bronitsky’s name, he should have used it in connection with the answers that Mr. Bronitsky provided on August 20, 2020, which directly addressed core issues of the report, among them, USAGM’s mission, its relationship with VOA, and the agency’s handling of election coverage.
- NPR asserted that Mr. Dewey “declined comment to NPR,” but again that is not correct. Mr. Dewey was never asked to comment on the present story—USAGM was. Mr. Dewey was asked to comment in the August 20, 2020 story. He did not decline to do so, but referred the inquiry through proper channels (to which Mr. Folkenflik said “terrific thanks”) leading to USAGM’s (ignored) response.
- The following statement is available on the record, attributable to Mr. Bronitsky as “a USAGM spokesperson”: “The allegations that Mr. Dewey ‘repeatedly pushed to be involved in planning further coverage of the political season,’ ‘has repeatedly pushed to participate in planning for election reporting and overarching news coverage,’ and ‘sought to help steer

future campaign coverage' are categorically false. At no time did Mr. Dewey, or any other USAGM Front Office official, seek to be involved in planning election (or any) coverage, or to otherwise 'steer' such coverage. NPR's allegations are based entirely on anonymous sources and its report contains no evidence to back up these assertions. If NPR has evidence to support its statements, it should produce it. It is outrageous to make such a baseless and scurrilous accusation, fail to ask for comment on the specific allegation, then claim that NPR did ask for such comment, while also ignoring a prior USAGM comment that is directly on point, denying that such conduct occurred."

- NPR referenced a tweet by the VOA Spanish language service that you allege was biased in favor of President Trump. The following statement is available on the record, again, attributable to Mr. Bronitsky as "a USAGM spokesperson": "This is the first that the USAGM Front Office has heard of this matter. Upon reading NPR's article, USAGM immediately directed that VOA leadership review the matter, and if the tweet was as reported, directed that Human Resources open an investigation in coordination with USAGM."
- A senior VOA career official reviewed your allegations as a matter of urgency and found that NPR's reporting was false. Specifically, the official relayed the following. As a conscious journalistic decision, as part of its convention coverage plan for both conventions, the VOA Spanish service had decided that all coverage of each political convention would be posted to a "thread" in Twitter, rather than being individually tweeted. The Republican response to the first night of the Democratic Convention was initially incorrectly sent out as a separate tweet, however. It should have been posted to the thread, as was the plan. When editors noticed the mistake, they took down the tweet and incorporated it in the thread. The senior VOA career official also stated, "[i]f NPR had asked for us to verify the allegation, we would have corrected its reporter."

In USAGM's view, the problems detailed herein, cumulatively, require retraction of much of the reports.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

Principal Director of Public Affairs
U.S. Agency for Global Media

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
Subject: Fwd: Information Request
Date: Sunday, August 2, 2020 8:33:56 PM

From: Daniel Robinson (b) (6)
Sent: Sunday, August 2, 2020 8:16:48 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Information Request

Jonathan Bronitsky
Public Affairs
U.S. Agency for Global Media

Jonathan,

This is a request for information relating to a story BBG/USAGM Watch is preparing regarding OPM/ODNI assessments of agency failures to adequately vet staff and associated national security threats from years of deficiencies.

It's my understanding that USAGM plans to issue a statement on this subject on Tuesday. It would be helpful if you could confirm the timing of any such statement and clarify whether documentation, including the OPM report from 2020, will be formally released as part of this or whether this document should be considered as background for media.

I have the following questions -- the first three relate specifically to the security deficiency issues that are a matter of grave concern to Mr. Pack and his team:

- Were investigative authorities ever returned to the agency after their transfer to NBIB/DOD?
- What is new USAGM management's understanding of progress made by the agency as of this month toward re-investigating the 1,527 cases (OPM's report refers to 310 as of earlier this year)?
- What is the status of State Department OIG attention to the security issues identified in the OPM's 2020 report?
- Is Mr. Pack aware that long-running abuse of J-1 visa policy stretches throughout VOA and many language services?

Your assistance with responses would be greatly appreciated.

Daniel Robinson (b) (6)

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Frank Wuco](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Sam Dewey](#)
Subject: Fwd: Media Inquiry
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2020 9:05:21 PM

FYSA

From: Daniel Robinson (b) (6)
Sent: Sunday, September 6, 2020 8:41:15 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry

This is a media inquiry seeking USAGM comment.

One week after a group of 14 Voice of America employees publicly challenged the new CEO, it's unclear whether key figures involved in organizing and promoting the unprecedented protest will face any disciplinary action.

Documents and social media posts obtained by USAGM Watch show that VOA's two White House correspondents have been key leaders of the protest, with one the apparent leader of steps to add signatures to the original protest letter.

One of them has used her Facebook page to campaign for J-1 visa holders forced to leave the U.S. The other has used his Facebook page, which he uses to promote his coverage for VOA, to support outside critics of Michael Pack who compared the CEO's actions to McCarthyism.

Questions:

Is USAGM aware of the above?

Is USAGM actively investigating, or has it investigated, the origins of the protest letter sent to the CEO?

Will the organizers of the protest, including the drafters and signatories of the letter, face any disciplinary action?

It appears, based on initial checks by USAGM Watch, that (b) (6) may once again be blocking citizen journalists -- editors and contributors to USAGM Watch -- from viewing his Facebook page ["w7voa"]. As reported by USAGM Watch in the past, (b) (6) was previously ordered by USAGM/VOA officials to remove an earlier block that prevented us from viewing his content. Is USAGM aware of this?

Thank you for your time.

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [CEO2016](#)
Subject: Fwd: Media Inquiry
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2020 11:29:54 PM

FYSA

From: Daniel Robinson (b) (6)
Sent: Sunday, September 6, 2020 8:41:15 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry

This is a media inquiry seeking USAGM comment.

One week after a group of 14 Voice of America employees publicly challenged the new CEO, it's unclear whether key figures involved in organizing and promoting the unprecedented protest will face any disciplinary action.

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Thank you for your time.

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Diane Cullo](#)
Subject: Fwd: Media Request for Comment: USAGM J-1 renewals
Date: Saturday, July 11, 2020 1:16:07 PM

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Saturday, July 11, 2020 1:02:55 PM

To: (b) (6) Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)

Cc: (b) (6)

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Subject: Media Request for Comment: USAGM J-1 renewals

Good afternoon. Please could you provide clarification and comment on the following findings and claims in our reporting:

A USAGM spokesperson said earlier this week that the J-1 visa renewal process is aimed at improving agency management, protecting U.S. national security and ensuring that hiring authorities are not misused.

Please could you provide clarification or incidents of alleged mismanagement and hiring authority misuse that led to this decision, and what national security concerns the agency has that were not addressed in its existing vetting process.

About 30 VOA journalists have J-1 visas that have or are due to expire soon. Some have already booked flights to their home countries because they have not received a definitive decision on their visa. Will USAGM expedite their renewals?

Can you provide comment on claims that:

The visa delay endangers some VOA journalists, who risk arrest or retaliation if forced to return to their home countries because of their reporting for VOA.

The visa delays and recent leadership changes and journalist dismissals risk damaging VOA's reputation as an independent broadcaster.

That the visa delays risk hampering VOA's ability to cover the news for its large international audience during a busy news cycle when staff are focused on the pandemic, upcoming U.S. elections, and race relations.

Thanks for your time,

(b) (6)

Assignment Editor
VOA News Center

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Diane Cullo](#)
Subject: Fwd: Media Request for Comment: USAGM J-1 renewals
Date: Saturday, July 11, 2020 3:35:17 PM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Saturday, July 11, 2020 3:03:42 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
(b) (6)

Subject: RE: Media Request for Comment: USAGM J-1 renewals

Hello

Please could you provide clarification and comment today on the following:

The number of contractors and staff at VOA News who hold a J-1 visa that are due for renewal between July 1 and Aug.31.

And please provide comment today on VOA journalists who say they are worried the J-1 visa renewal delays and changes to the review process may affect the broadcaster's ability to continue to comprehensively cover news for their overseas audiences.

Kind regards,

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Saturday, July 11, 2020 1:03 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
(b) (6)

Subject: Media Request for Comment: USAGM J-1 renewals

Good afternoon. Please could you provide clarification and comment on the following findings and claims in our reporting:

A USAGM spokesperson said earlier this week that the J-1 visa renewal process is aimed at improving agency management, protecting U.S. national security and ensuring that hiring authorities are not misused.

Please could you provide clarification or incidents of alleged mismanagement and hiring authority misuse that led to this decision, and what national security concerns the agency

has that were not addressed in its existing vetting process.

About 30 VOA journalists have J-1 visas that have or are due to expire soon. Some have already booked flights to their home countries because they have not received a definitive decision on their visa. Will USAGM expedite their renewals?

Can you provide comment on claims that:

The visa delay endangers some VOA journalists, who risk arrest or retaliation if forced to return to their home countries because of their reporting for VOA.

The visa delays and recent leadership changes and journalist dismissals risk damaging VOA's reputation as an independent broadcaster.

That the visa delays risk hampering VOA's ability to cover the news for its large international audience during a busy news cycle when staff are focused on the pandemic, upcoming U.S. elections, and race relations.

Thanks for your time,

(b) (6)

Assignment Editor
VOA News Center

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: Fwd: Memos for Review
Date: Monday, December 21, 2020 11:18:14 AM
Attachments: [CEO memo - security issues - draft.docx](#)
[image001.png](#)
[CEO memo - consolidation - draft.docx](#)
[CEO memo - journalistic independence - draft.docx](#)
[CEO memo - J-1 visas and the hiring of foreign nationals - draft.docx](#)
[CEO memo - spending review - draft.docx](#)

From: Jonathan Bronitsky
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2020 5:16:12 PM
To: Morvared Namdarkhan (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Memos for Review

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

From: Morvared Namdarkhan (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2020 3:20 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Memos for Review

Can you send them to me?

Best,
Mora Namdar, Esq
Senior Advisor to the CEO
Vice President for Legal, Compliance, and Risk
US Agency for Global Media

(b) (6)

w) (b) (6)

c) (b) (6)



U.S. Agency for Global Media | Broadcasting Board of Governors
330 Independence Ave. SW | Washington, DC 20237
<http://usagm.gov>

--

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Pre-decisional and Deliberative Communication

From: [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Diane Cullo](#); [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: Fwd: Messaging: J-1 / VOA (draft)
Date: Monday, August 31, 2020 10:39:31 PM

This is much improved. Thanks for your work on this.

****HOWEVER**, this email thread raises a number of concerns and questions, including:

Why is this being bounced around via email with MP before going through even the semblance of clearance?

What is the reference to extension of the J-1 visa program? I didn't see or clear an extension, and very much hope this is a typo. If not, please send background info immediately.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

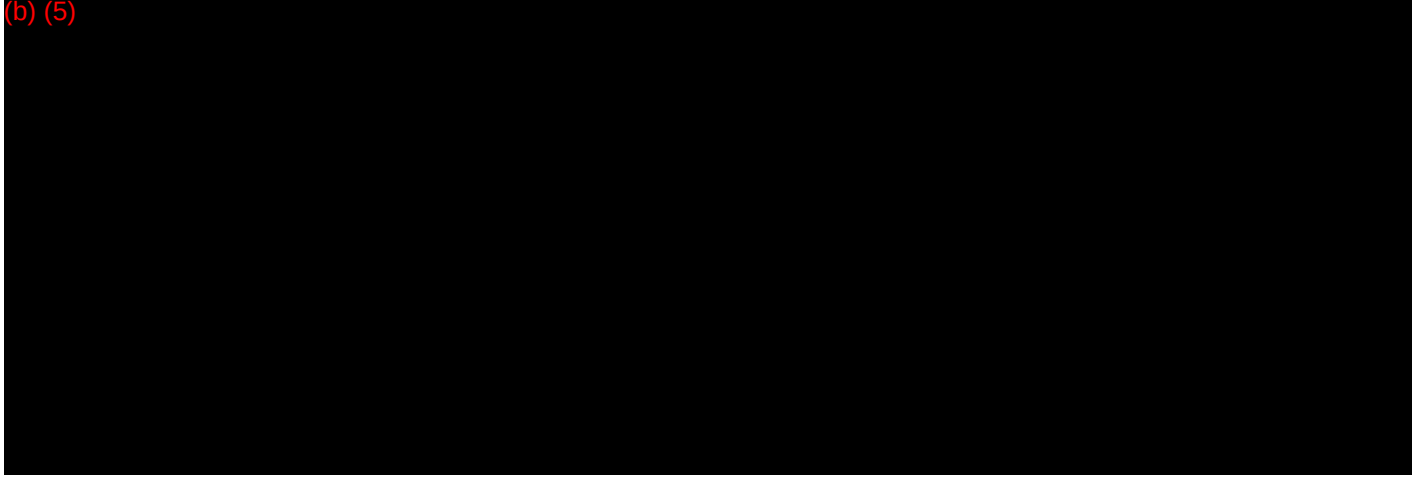
From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 9:54 PM
To: Frank Wuco; CEO2016
Cc: Toni DeLancey; Emily Pauline Newman; Diane Cullo
Subject: Re: Messaging: J-1 / VOA (draft)

Very good. Michael?

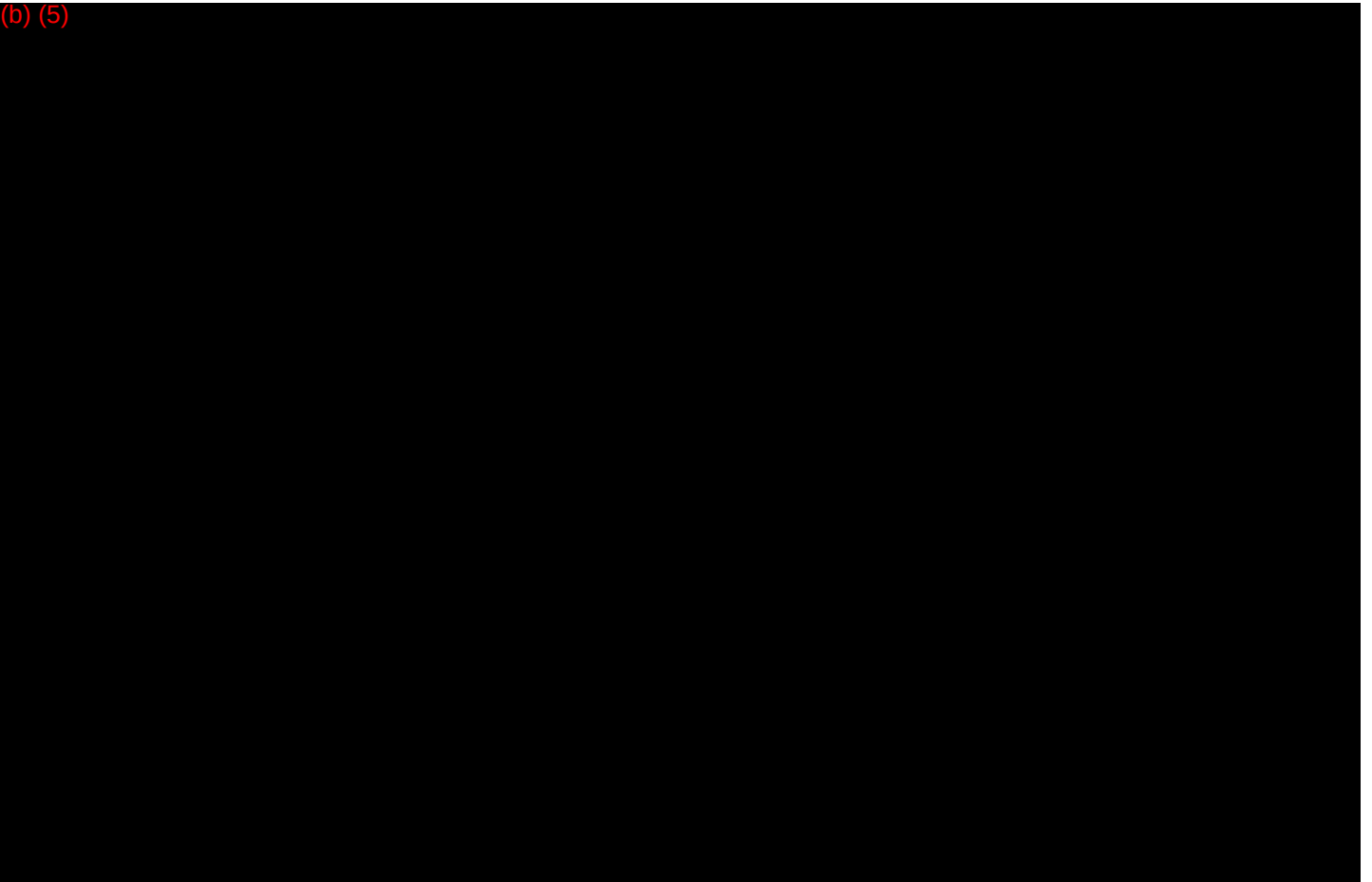
From: Frank Wuco (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 9:22:02 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); CEO2016 (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6)
Diane Cullo (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Messaging: J-1 / VOA (draft)

Alternative, below:

(b) (5)



(b) (5)



From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 8:35 PM
To: CEO2016 (b) (6); Frank Wuco (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6);
Diane Cullo (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Messaging: J-1 / VOA (draft)

Correct, Michael, that's what I reupped above.

Team, any thoughts on the J-1 copy?

From: CEO2016 (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 8:05 PM
To: Frank Wuco
Cc: Jonathan Bronitsky; Toni DeLancey; Emily Pauline Newman; Diane Cullo
Subject: Re: Messaging: J-1 / VOA (draft)

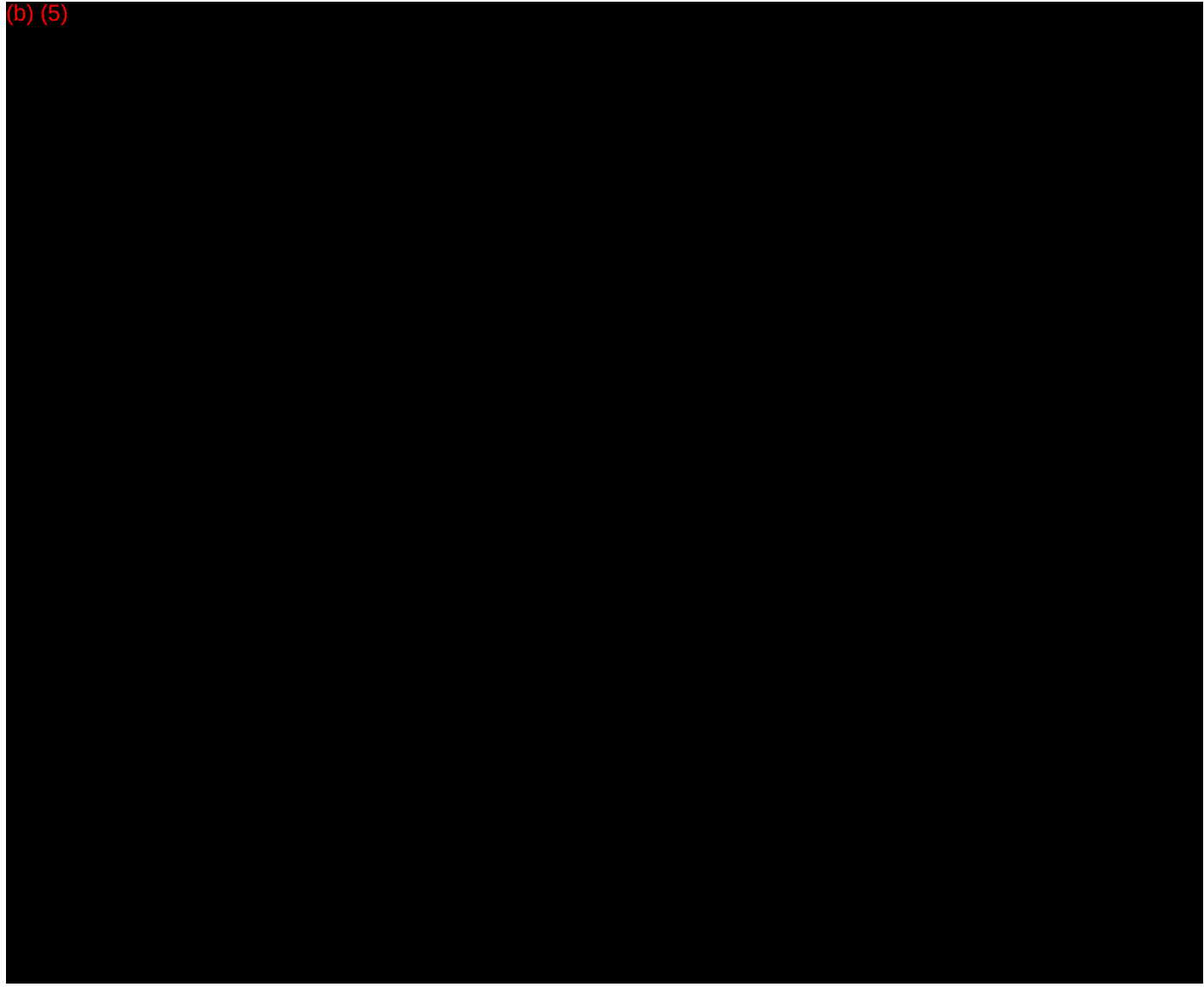
We also need a j1 statement

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 31, 2020, at 5:01 PM, Frank Wuco (b) (6) wrote:

Recommended Statement:

(b) (5)



From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 3:52 PM
To: CEO2016 (b) (6); Frank Wuco (b) (6); Toni DeLancey (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6); Diane Cullo (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Messaging: J-1 / VOA (draft)
Importance: High

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

Awaiting comment and clearance.

(b) (5)

From: Jonathan Bronitsky

Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 3:14 PM

To: CEO2016 (b) (6)

Cc: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Toni DeLancey (b) (6);
Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6); Diane Cullo (b) (6)

Subject: RE: Messaging: J-1 / VOA (draft)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

(b) (5)

From: CEO2016 (b) (6)

Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 2:46 PM

To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)

Cc: CEO2016 (b) (6); Frank Wuco (b) (6); Toni
DeLancey (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6);
Diane Cullo (b) (6)

Subject: Re: Messaging: J-1 / VOA (draft)

Basically right. Let me see what others say. Did you want to correct specific errors in the VOA one.

Michael Pack

Chief Executive Officer

U.S. Agency for Global Media

(b) (6)

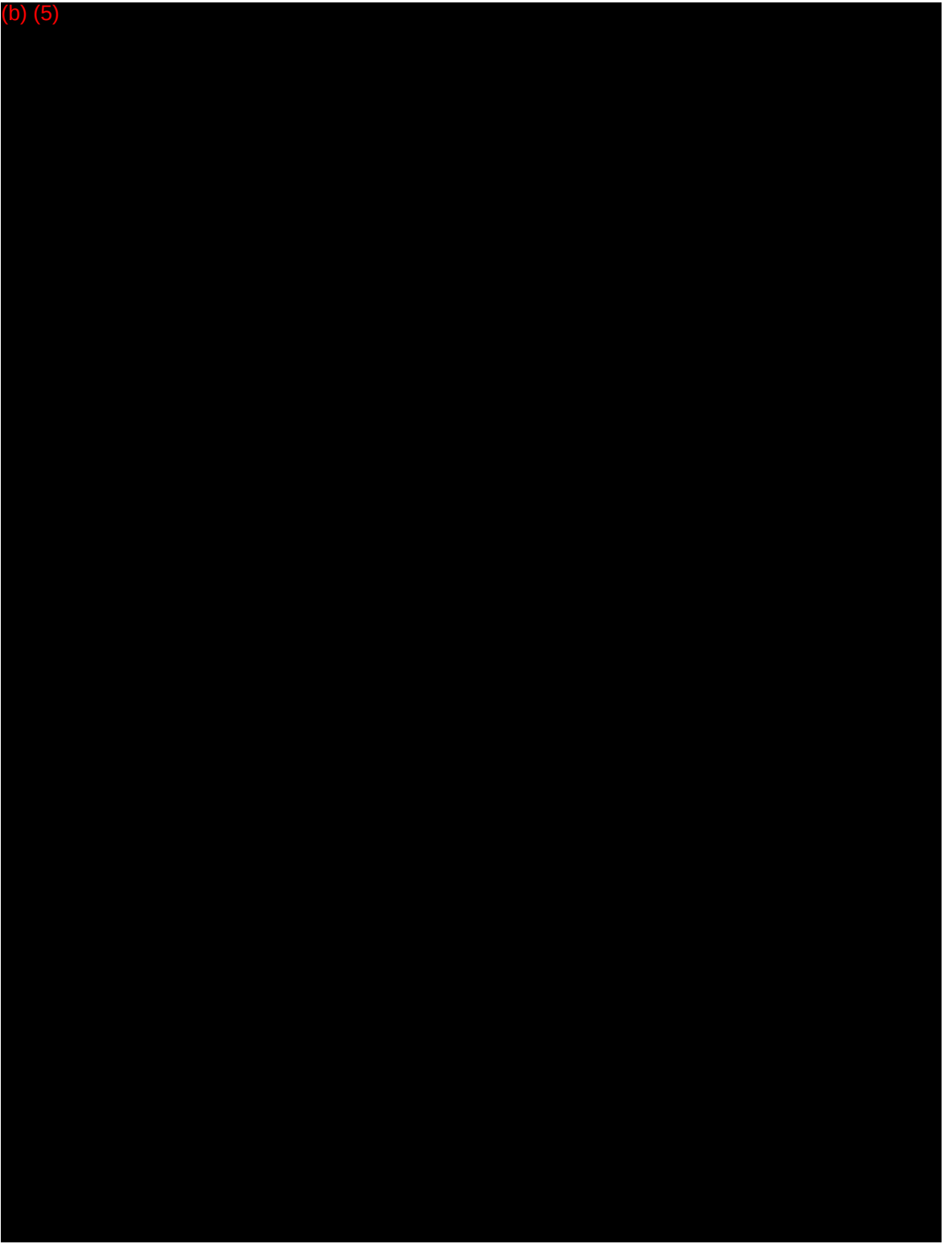
On Aug 31, 2020, at 2:24 PM, Jonathan Bronitsky
(b) (6) wrote:

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

J-1:

(b) (5)

(b) (5)



From: [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Fwd: Press on J-1 Visas
Date: Friday, July 10, 2020 11:43:33 PM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Andre Mendes (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 10:13 AM
To: Emily Pauline Newman; Diane Cullo; Michael Pack
Subject: FW: Press on J-1 Visas

I have not replied.

Let me know your thoughts on this.

Best,

a

From: Grant Turner (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 10:12 AM
To: Andre Mendes (b) (6)
Subject: Press on J-1 Visas

Hi Andre,

OMB seems to be concerned about all the press on J-1 visas that is happening right now. (b) (6) inquired and (b) (6)'s probably passing info up to (b) (6) and (b) (6) and probably (b) (6) (b) (6) called yesterday and I told (b) (6) I didn't know anything about it, just the one news article that had been circulating. You may not know much about this either, but I wanted to flag OMB's interest. I read a couple of the other articles too and I'm sure like me you are worried about potential impacts for people who may have to return to countries where they are no longer welcome due to the broadcasting they have done for USAGM. Obviously some could face harassment, imprisonment, and death threats and killing of journalists are not off the table for some of the countries we deal with. I'm sure this will come up with our appropriators and authorizers imminently, too. The senate is writing their bill now and obviously want to talk with us about the CN. It might be good to get ahead of this since we have confirmed to the press that we are doing a review of visas. For instance, we could have GC research asylum rules. Even if ultimately we don't think someone is a good fit for the journalistic enterprise, we may want to help them understand their rights to remain in the country since health and safety is at stake. Let me know if you want me to flag this for Dave or you could ping Michael Williams. By the way, I'm trying to work on some talking points for the eventual discussion the new leadership team may have to conduct with (b) (6) and (b) (6). I don't know if Diane or Mr Pack will want you to face down that difficult tete-a-tete, but either way I'll try and flag a few of the big concerns that will likely come up.

Grant

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From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: Request for Comment
Date: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 4:56:47 PM

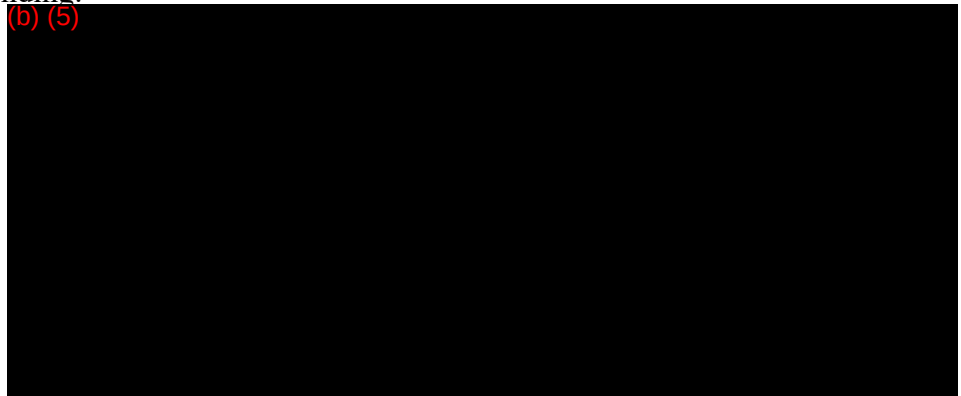
FYSA

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 4:51 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: Request for Comment

(b) (6)
This is all we are sending:

(b) (5)



From: Terrence Matsuo (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 2:21:39 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Public Relations (b) (6); Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Request for Comment

Dear (b) (6):

Thank you for passing along my request to the USAGM. I am grateful for your assistance.

On Tue, Jul 14, 2020 at 1:59 PM (b) (6) wrote:

Hello,

Thank you for your email inquiry.

I am copying the USAGM Public Affairs Office, as they are the point of contact with regard to the status of USAGM's decisions on the J-1 visas for VOA journalists, so please communicate directly with them on those questions.

I will get back to you shortly about your VOA Korean related questions.

Regards,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Voice of America

U.S. Agency for Global Media

(formerly Broadcasting Board of Governors)
330 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20237

(b) (6)

Direct

Main

(b) (6)

www.insidevoa.com

@insidevoa



From: Terrence Matsuo (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 1:56 PM
To: Public Relations (b) (6)
Subject: Request for Comment

To whom it may concern:

My name is Terrence Matsuo and I am the Washington correspondent for NK News, an agency focused on North Korea.

I am interested in recent reports about the decision to review visas for journalists at VOA. Are these reports accurate?

Why are these reviews taking place? USAGM CEO Michael Peck wrote in an op-ed for the New York Post that his agency "needs a turnaround badly, and I'm determined to deliver one." How does this review accomplish that?

Additionally, how many journalists in total work for the Korean services of VOA? Of those, how many journalists have visas that are being reviewed?

How will this decision affect VOA operations to broadcast news into North Korea?

I would appreciate your response.

Thank you very much.

--

Best,

Terrence Matsuo
Washington Correspondent

[NK News](#) – News and opinion
[Korea Risk Group](#) – Institutional services
[NK Pro](#) – Research tools, data and premium analysis

(b) (6)
m USA (b) (6)



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--

Best,

Terrence Matsuo
Washington Correspondent
[NK News](#) – News and opinion
[Korea Risk Group](#) – Institutional services
[NK Pro](#) – Research tools, data and premium analysis

(b) (6)
m USA +1 (b) (6)



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From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#); [Diane Cullo](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Thad Strom](#)
Subject: Fwd: request
Date: Thursday, October 22, 2020 4:57:23 PM
Attachments: [Lawfare_ProgramTranscript_20201021.docx](#)
[Lawfare_ProgramTranscript_20201021.pdf](#)

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: David Kotz (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, October 22, 2020 3:55:04 PM
To: Sam Dewey (b) (6)
Subject: RE: request

[Lawfare_ProgramTranscript_20201021.docx](#) [Lawfare_ProgramTranscript_20201021.pdf](#)
See attached both in word and pdf.

David

*H. David Kotz
Director, Office of Human Resources
U.S. Agency for Global Media
330 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20237
Office phone: (b) (6); Cell phone: (b) (6)*

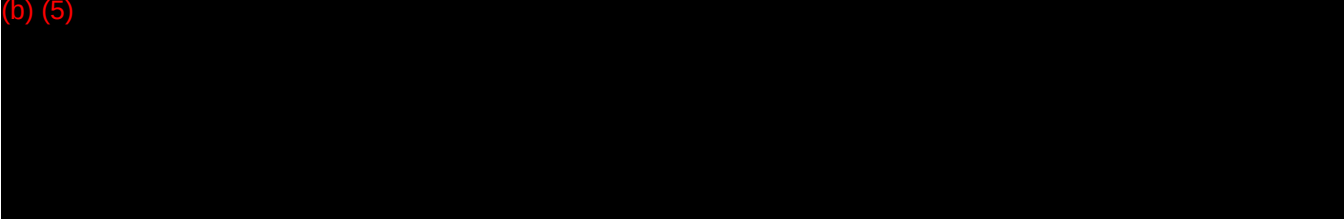
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From: Sam Dewey (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, October 22, 2020 10:15 AM
To: David Kotz (b) (6)
Subject: request

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PRE-DECISIONAL/DELIBERATIVE**

David:

(b) (5)



Thanks!

Sam

[The Lawfare Podcast: Fear and Loathing at the U.S. Agency for Global Media](#)

The Lawfare Podcast

October 21, 2020

Jen Patja Howell

From: (b) (6)
To: Jonathan Bronitsky; Toni DeLancey; Kellie Boyle
Cc: USAGM Public Affairs Staff
Subject: Fwd: Update #3: USAGM Media Clips
Date: Monday, January 11, 2021 5:54:27 PM

The Hill - <https://www.google.com/amp/s/thehill.com/homenews/administration/533721-pompeo-feud-with-us-global-media-agency-intensifies%3famp>

Bloomberg- <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.bloombergquint.com/amp/politics/pompeo-demands-voice-of-america-promote-u-s-as-the-greatest>

UrduPoint News/Sputnik
- <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.urdupoint.com/en/amp/world/pompeo-says-voa-worker-protest-to-his-speech-1138154.html>

The Federalist - <https://thefederalist.com/2021/01/11/sec-of-state-pompeo-blasts-tech-censors-authoritarianism-cloaked-as-moral-righteousness/>

YONHAP News Agency- <https://m-en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20210112000200325>

Washington Times text:

Pompeo slams anti-American 'woke-ism' at Voice of America, U.S. broadcast outlets

By [Bill Gertz](#) - *The Washington Times* - Monday, January 11, 2021

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Monday criticized “wokeness” and political correctness within the official government [Voice of America](#) broadcaster after some employees protested his plan to speak to official U.S. broadcasters at [VOA](#) headquarters.

Mr. [Pompeo](#) said [Voice of America](#), which broadcasts to a global audience beyond U.S. shores, had “lost its voice” and needs to step up efforts to promote democracy, freedom and American values, instead of criticizing the United States.

The comments were a harsh response to critics in Congress and some press outlets that have charged the [Trump administration](#) was seeking to end the journalistic

independence of [Voice of America](#), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and other well-known U.S. government broadcasting arms.

Mr. [Pompeo](#) said that, as with other government agencies, the international broadcast outlets had lost their way after the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s.

“Many wrote that history was over. We allowed security protocols to lapse, and [VOA](#) lost its commitment to its founding mission,” Mr. [Pompeo](#) said, according to his prepared remarks. “Its broadcasts had become less about telling the truth about America, and too often about demeaning America.”

[VOA](#)’s parent, the U.S. Agency for Global Media, also lost its ability to grant security clearances after foreign nationals were given access to secrets without proper vetting of employees at [VOA](#), RFE/RL, Radio Free Asia and other broadcasters.

Congress sought to strengthen broadcasting by creating a new chief executive officer position for the USAGM, which oversees the networks that receive more than \$700 million annually in taxpayer funding.

Mr. [Pompeo](#) noted that some [VOA](#) employees had protested his appearance and did not want his remarks broadcast over [VOA](#)’s networks.

“Think about that,” he said. “We are all parts of institutions with duties and responsibilities higher than any of us. And this kind of censorial instinct is dangerous. It’s morally wrong. And it’s against your mandate.”

“Censorship, wokeness, political correctness, it all points in one direction — authoritarianism cloaked as moral righteousness,” Mr. [Pompeo](#) added, noting the recent purge of voices on social media platforms Twitter and Facebook and restrictions on social media apps by Apple.

“This is not who we are, as Americans. It’s not what [Voice of America](#) should be,” he said. “It’s time to put ‘woke-ism’ to sleep.”

Mr. [Pompeo](#) said in a speech broadcast around the world in more than 40 languages that official and semi-official broadcasters should acknowledge America's faults and shortcomings, but provide better balance.

"But this isn't the Vice of America, focusing on everything that's wrong with our great nation," he said. "It certainly isn't the place to give authoritarian regimes in Beijing or Tehran a platform."

Mr. [Pompeo](#) said the [VOA](#)'s mission is to promote democracy, freedom and American values, a mission that sets them apart from private news outlets like MSNBC and Fox News.

Official broadcasters are tasked with giving voice to populations struggling under totalitarian and authoritarian rule in places like China and Iran.

"You're the voice of American exceptionalism. You're the tip of freedom's spear," he said.

Mr. [Pompeo](#) said the [administration](#) has been working to fix problems at the broadcasters, through better vetting of employees and reorienting [VOA](#) back to its mission of "truth and unbiased reporting."

The [administration](#) appointed conservative documentary filmmaker Michael Pack to head the USAGM, and recently appointed conservative Robert Reilly, a former [VOA](#) director to head [VOA](#). Other conservatives recently appointed include Victoria Coates as head of Middle East broadcasting and Stephen Yates as head of Radio Free Asia.

Mr. [Pompeo](#) also contended [VOA](#) had been "rubber-stamping" visas for foreign national employees, including from China. "We shouldn't be doing that," he said.

"The [Trump Administration](#) isn't trying to politicize these institutions," he added. "We're trying to de-politicize them," he said.

The secretary of state also said China last year spread propaganda surrounding

violent protests last summer in a bid to promote the authoritarian communist system. Mr. [Pompeo](#) said the Chinese Communist Party sought to exploit the tragic death of George Floyd by asserting the communist system was superior to the American democratic model.

“During the best of times, the PRC ruthlessly imposes communism. Amid the most difficult challenges, the United States secures freedom,” Mr. [Pompeo](#) said, repeating a comment made last year. “There’s no moral equivalence. This is a self-evident truth. It’s not fake news for you to broadcast that this is the greatest nation the world has ever known.”

<https://m.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/jan/11/pompeo-slams-anti-american-woke-ism-voice-america/>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: (b) (6)
Date: January 11, 2021 at 5:00:25 PM EST
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6), Toni DeLancey (b) (6), Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Cc: USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6)
Subject: Update #2: USAGM Media Clips

[Pompeo trumpets Trump, razzes critics in speech to VOA](#)

Associated Press
January 11, 2021
Matthew Lee

[Pompeo re-designates Cuba as state sponsor of terrorism](#)

WPLG local10
January 11, 2021
Hatzel Vela, Reporter
Andrea Torres, Digital Reporter/Producer

[Announcement of President Donald Trump's 'term ended' on State Department website was likely by disgruntled staffer, according to report](#)

MassLive

January 11, 2021

Benjamin Kail

We don't have subscriptions to these outlets. I'll try to track down the text:

[Pompeo slams anti-American 'woke-ism' at Voice of America, U.S. broadcast outlets](#)

Washington Times

January 11, 2021

Bill Gertz

[Pompeo Demands Voice of America Promote U.S. as the Greatest](#)

Bloomberg

January 11, 2021

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 1:31 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); Toni DeLancey
(b) (6); Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Update: USAGM Media Clips

[Transition Roundup: More Fallout from Riots; VOA Employees Protest Pompeo's Speech](#)

Here's today's list of news updates and stories you may have missed.

Government Executive

January 11, 2021

Courtney Buble

[Voice of America Employees Try Blocking Pompeo Speech From Airing: Pompeo Fires Back](#)

DailyWire.com

January 11, 2021

Hank Berrien

[Secretary Pompeo delivers remarks at Voice of America, in Washington, D.C.](#)

Just The Real News

January 11, 2021

[Webcast - Secretary Pompeo delivers remarks at ...](#)

DVIDS -- www.dvidshub.net › webcast

January 11, 2021

[LIVE: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo makes ...](#)

***YouTube* -- www.youtube.com › watch**

Video for "voice of america" -site:voanews.com

LIVE: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo makes remarks at Voice of America.

January 11, 2021

[Pompeo Speaks at VOA 1/11](#)

LIVE:Pompeo Speaks at VOA 1/11

GNews

January 11, 2021

[Voice of America CEO Accused of Fraud](#)

TV Technology

January 11, 2021

Michael Balderston

[The president did not incite violence: WSJ Op-Ed](#)

White House Dossier

January 11, 2021

Rebekah Koffler

[Whether Trump 'incited' Capitol riot is in eye of the beholder](#)

It should be easy to make the political argument Trump's words are at fault. Legally, it

will be more difficult.

Al Jazeera

January 11, 2021

Steve Chaggaris

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 8:51 AM

To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); Toni DeLancey

(b) (6); Kellie Boyle (b) (6)

Cc: USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6)

Subject: USAGM Media Clips

[No, Trump Isn't Guilty of Incitement](#)

Inflaming emotions isn't a crime. The president didn't mention violence, much less provoke it.

Wall Street Journal

January 10, 2020

Jeffrey Scott Shapiro

[full text below]

[Voice of America employees protest order to broadcast Pompeo speech, calling it 'propaganda'](#)

Washington Post

January 8, 2020

Paul Farhi

[full text below]

[Attempts of Voice of America Employees to Silent Secretary Pompeo](#)

Secretary Pompeo Voice of America

GNews.org

January 10, 2020

Himalaya Rose Garden Team

How the press can hold Trump's enablers—and itself—to account

Committee to Protect Journalists

January 11, 2020

Jon Allsop

[Voice of America Whistleblowers Protest Upcoming Live Worldwide Broadcast of Address by Secretary of State Pompeo to Live Audience of VOA Staff at VOA Headquarters](#)

Government Accountability Project

January 8, 2020

[Voice of America CEO Accused Of Fraud, Misuse Of Office All In One Week](#)

NPR

January 8, 2021

David Folkenflik

[Impeachment threatens to derail Biden transition](#)

POLITICO - Transition Playbook

January 8, 2020

Theodoric Meyer and Alex Thompson

[Daily Kickoff](#)

JewishInsider -- Around the Web

January 11, 2021

[Voice of America employees protest order to broadcast Pompeo speech, calling it 'propaganda'](#)

Washington Post

January 8, 2020

Paul Farhi

Staffers at Voice of America, the government-funded international news organization, have filed a whistleblower complaint raising concerns about an upcoming address by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, saying it would be risky for them to gather at the agency's headquarters amid the coronavirus pandemic and that orders to broadcast his speech amount to promoting "propaganda."

In a letter to [Michael Pack](#), the Trump appointee who heads VOA's parent agency, the employees wrote that the planned speech "endangers public health and safety, violates law, rule and regulation and grossly wastes government resources."

The complaint is the latest skirmish in an ongoing battle among current and former employees of VOA and Pack, a conservative former documentary filmmaker who runs the U.S. Agency for Global Media, which oversees VOA and four other international news networks.

Since his appointment in June, Pack has fired longtime managers and installed a cadre of loyalists while asserting the right to dictate news coverage, despite legal requirements prohibiting it.

The agencies, which include Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Asia, were set up by the federal government decades ago to provide independent news reporting and commentary to countries in which authoritarian governments suppress free speech and the news media.

[*How Trump's obsessions with media and loyalty coalesced in a battle for Voice of America*](#)

Pompeo is scheduled to address VOA employees at its headquarters in Washington on Monday afternoon. According to a staff announcement sent Friday, Pompeo will address "the continuing importance of our work given emerging threats to the values and interests of the United States." VOA Director Robert Reilly will conduct a question-and-answer session with Pompeo afterward.

The protest letter, which was also sent to Reilly and the congressional committees that oversee VOA, was written on behalf of five VOA

employees by the [Government Accountability Project](#), a public-interest law firm that represents whistleblowers.

Last month, the group raised a complaint about [Pack's appointment of Reilly](#), questioning Reilly's qualifications and calling his published writings critical of gay and Muslim people "hate speech." Reilly briefly served as VOA director — its top editorial executive — during the George W. Bush administration.

Pompeo will address VOA employees in the agency's auditorium, which holds about 400 people. But VOA officials said capacity for his speech will be limited to about 50 people due to social-distancing requirements. Internal video links will enable employees to watch remotely.

David Seide, the senior counsel for the Government Accountability Project, said Reilly's intention to broadcast the speech worldwide via VOA's 47 foreign-language channels and video streams amounts to a violation of a statutory "firewall" prohibiting political influence over editorial judgments. He said Reilly was acting at Pack's direction.

"The secretary of state has the First Amendment right to make any speech he'd like, and VOA has every right to cover it, but we've crossed a line when the coverage is being dictated and the way this is being staged," Seide said in an interview.

He said it is "disingenuous" for VOA to exclude outside news media from covering Pompeo's talk because of covid-19 restrictions while inviting employees to attend. The decision to carry it on VOA's channels should be left up to its journalists, he added.

In his letter, Seide wrote: "A broadcast speech by the outgoing secretary of state on topics on which he has been widely covered should be seen for what it is: the use of VOA to disseminate political propaganda in the waning days of the Trump administration. . . . The event is plainly a publicity stunt devoid of public interest and thus constitutes a gross misuse of government resources."

A VOA spokesperson, Bridget Serchak, said the agency "scrupulously

adheres to all [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] covid-19 guidelines.” She offered no further comment.
Pack’s representatives at the U.S. Agency for Global Media didn’t respond to a request for comment.

No, Trump Isn’t Guilty of Incitement

Inflaming emotions isn’t a crime. The president didn’t mention violence, much less provoke it.

Wall Street Journal
January 10, 2020
Jeffrey Scott Shapiro

House Democrats have drafted an article of impeachment that accuses President Trump of “incitement to insurrection.” Acting U.S. Attorney Michael Sherwin said Thursday that his office is “looking at all actors here and anyone that had a role” in the Capitol riot. Some reporters have construed that as including Mr. Trump.

The president didn’t commit incitement or any other crime. I should know. As a Washington prosecutor I earned the nickname “protester prosecutor” from the antiwar group CodePink. In one trial, I convicted 31 protesters who disrupted congressional traffic by obstructing the Capitol Crypt. In another, I convicted a CodePink activist who smeared her hands with fake blood, charged at then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in a House hearing room, and incited the audience to seize the secretary of state physically. In other cases, I dropped charges when the facts fell short of the legal standard for incitement. One such defendant was the antiwar activist Cindy Sheehan.

Hostile journalists and lawmakers have suggested Mr. Trump incited the riot when he told a rally that Republicans need to “fight much harder.” Mr. Trump suggested the crowd walk to the Capitol: “We’re going to cheer on brave senators and congressmen and -women, and

we're probably not going to be cheering so much for some of them. Because you'll never take back our country with weakness. You have to show strength and you have to be strong."

In the District of Columbia, it's a crime to "intentionally or recklessly act in such a manner to cause another person to be in reasonable fear" and to "incite or provoke violence where there is a likelihood that such violence will ensue." This language is based on *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969), in which the Supreme Court set the standard for speech that could be prosecuted without violating the First Amendment. The justices held that a Ku Klux Klan leader's calls for violence against blacks and Jews were protected speech. The court found that Clarence Brandenburg's comments were "mere advocacy" of violence, not "directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action . . . likely to incite or produce such action."

The president didn't mention violence on Wednesday, much less provoke or incite it. He said, "I know that everyone here will soon be marching over to the Capitol building to peacefully and patriotically make your voices heard."

District law defines a riot as "a public disturbance . . . which by tumultuous and violent conduct or the threat thereof creates grave danger of damage or injury to property or persons." When Mr. Trump spoke, there was no "public disturbance," only a rally. The "disturbance" came later at the Capitol by a small minority who entered the perimeter and broke the law. They should be prosecuted.

The president's critics want him charged for inflaming the emotions of angry Americans. That alone does not satisfy the elements of any criminal offense, and therefore his speech is protected by the Constitution that members of Congress are sworn to support and defend.

Mr. Shapiro served as an assistant attorney general of the District of Columbia, 2007-09. He is a White House appointed official at the U.S. Agency for Global Media.

Appeared in the January 11, 2021, print edition as 'No, Trump Isn't Guilty Of Incitement.'

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: VOA inquiry on J1 visa renewals
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 12:08:56 PM

Jonathan,
Pls see below

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 11:25 AM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: VOA Newsroom Duty Editors
Subject: VOA inquiry on J1 visa renewals

Hi (b) (6) -

NPR, the Washington Post and others are reporting that USAGM CEO Michael Pack is declining to sign J1 visa renewals for VOA's foreign journalists. Can the USAGM clarify the CEO's position on the renewals? Is there a policy affecting all J1 renewals or is this happening on a case by case basis? Any information you can provide on this matter is much appreciated.

Thanks

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Toni DeLancey](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: FYI - WaPo Paul Fahri Article
Date: Tuesday, December 8, 2020 12:13:10 PM

[Trump appointee who oversees Voice of America refuses to cooperate with Biden transition team](#)

Washington Post
December 8, 2020
Paul Fahri

[Media](#)

Trump appointee who oversees Voice of America refuses to cooperate with Biden transition team

By [Paul Fahri](#)

Dec. 8, 2020 at 11:18 a.m. EST

A Trump appointee with a short but controversial record of overseeing Voice of America and other federally funded news agencies has declined to cooperate with president-elect Joe Biden's representatives as they seek access to records and personnel.

Michael Pack, who has headed the U.S. Agency for Global Media since June, has defied requests from Biden's transition team to make officials from his agency available to answer questions about the agencies' operations.

Biden's aides have indicated that [he would replace Pack](#), who has ordered a series of sweeping changes that have shaken up VOA and sister agencies, such as Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, the Office for Cuba Broadcasting and Radio Free Asia.

People who work at news agencies under Pack's supervision say his resistance is an open act of defiance against the incoming administration. Although Biden hasn't named a replacement for Pack, Biden's nominee likely would undo Pack's changes.

Trump's nomination of Pack — a documentary filmmaker whose work has [embraced conservative themes](#), such as a profile of Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas — was held up for nearly two years by objections from Senate Democrats and some Republicans. Trump finally broke the logjam in April by launching [an extraordinary attack on Voice of America](#), saying it was spreading foreign propaganda, and pressuring Republicans to confirm his nominee.

USAGM oversees an array of international broadcasters and news organizations that disseminate news and commentary to more than 300 million people per week, primarily in countries that suppress domestic news sources. Pack's critics have repeatedly said his operational and administrative changes since taking office were designed to turn the broadcasters into mouthpieces for Trump's policies and initiatives — the very thing that the networks are supposed to counter around the world.

Pack has [asserted the right to breach](#) the so-called “firewall” that protects VOA and related agencies from interference by political appointees, effectively making himself the arbiter of news coverage. He said the firewall rule passed by his agency's board of directors just before he took office was based on “flawed legal and constitutional reasoning” and made USAGM “difficult to manage.”

Among his first acts was to [fire or suspend](#) the heads of each of the broadcasting networks under his supervision, as well as senior managers at USAGM, who subsequently [filed a whistleblower complaint](#) and civil lawsuit against him. He has [declined to renew](#) expiring visas of foreign journalists employed by VOA, citing unspecified “security” concerns. He also launched an [investigation of VOA's White House bureau chief](#), Steve Herman, over alleged “bias” in his reporting; the investigation did not result in any public findings or disciplinary action.

How Trump's obsessions with media and loyalty coalesced in a battle for Voice of America

A federal judge last month [handed Pack a stinging rebuke](#), issuing injunctions that prohibit him from making personnel decisions involving journalists at the networks; from directly communicating with editors and journalists employed by them; and from investigating any editors or news stories produced by them.

In the past month, as Trump has asserted that Biden's election victory was tainted by fraud — a claim that has been rejected by judges who have thrown out dozens of lawsuits filed by Trump's campaign or his allies — some federal agencies have been slow to cooperate with Biden's transition teams. At the Department of Defense, chief of staff Kash Patel has [blocked some career officials](#) and experts from giving information about defense issues to the transition team. A similar foot-dragging response seems to be playing out at USAGM, according to people familiar with the situation who asked not to be named because they're not authorized to comment.

Among other things, Pack has instructed associates not to discuss his agency's operations, budget and personnel with Biden's transition team, as transition officials have requested, these people said.

Biden's team has asked USAGM's management and the heads of its networks to prepare three-to-five page memos that detail current operations, personnel and budget information, policy and regulatory priorities, covid-prevention steps and technology issues, among other topics. It has also requested interviews with 32 officials and employees, including Pack and VOA's Herman.

Richard Stengel, who is leading Biden's USAGM transition, declined to comment, as did the transition's spokesman, Ned Price. USAGM's representative did not respond to a request for comment.

As a practical matter, a late start in gaining access to information could slow the Biden administration oversight of USAGM.

However, Stengel, the former editor of Time magazine, already has some institutional knowledge and experience. As a State Department official in charge of public diplomacy and public affairs during the Obama Administration, Stengel was frequently in contact with the agency's board of directors. When VOA's former editorial director, Amanda Bennett, resigned just before Pack assumed office, [he tweeted praise](#) of her.

From: [Marc Rod](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: HFAC Hearing — Jewish Insider Request for Comment
Date: Thursday, September 24, 2020 3:01:40 PM

Jonathan,

I hope this email finds you well.

I'm working on a story about today's HFAC hearing on USAGM, and I wanted to give Mr. Pack and/or the agency the opportunity to respond to the specific issues and accusations raised during today's hearing. My questions are as follows:

- Why did Mr. Pack not comply with the committee's subpoena to appear at today's hearing?
- Rep. Engel accused Mr. Pack of deliberately scheduling administrative hearings today to manufacture a conflict with today's hearing. How does Mr. Pack respond?
- Rep. Engel claimed that the other dates USAGM provided for which Mr. Pack is available to testify are while Congress is not in session. Does the agency dispute this? What dates were proposed?
- Rep. McCaul criticized Mr. Pack as having "undermined [USAGM] from the top" and of failing to meaningfully engage with Congress to answer basic questions. How does Mr. Pack respond?
- Grant Turner accused Mr. Pack of "gross mismanagement" and "abuse of authority," as well as "financial mismanagement" which left some networks and offices at risk of being unable to meet payroll. He further claimed that USAGM leadership refused to approve a cleaning contract or a toilet paper purchase for certain offices. Does the agency dispute this?
- Karen Kornbluh said that the Open Technology Fund's work has been "crippled" by Mr. Pack's actions. How does Mr. Pack respond?
- Ambassador Ryan Crocker said that Mr. Pack's actions have placed USAGM's reputation and work in jeopardy. How does Mr. Pack respond?
- Several members of congress and witnesses claimed that USAGM's decision not to renew J1 visas for some foreign journalists could endanger said journalists' safety and lives. How does Mr. Pack respond?
- Rep. Connolly accused Mr. Pack of "handing a gift" to several of the U.S.'s foreign adversaries through his actions at USAGM. How does Mr. Pack respond?
- Several members of Congress and witnesses said that Mr. Pack's speculation about potential foreign spies within the agency undermines USAGM's work, discredits its journalists, and physically endangers those working abroad. How does Mr. Pack respond? Does he have evidence that there are foreign spies working within USAGM?
- Rep. Castro said the aforementioned claims about spies were "libelous." Does Mr. Pack wish to respond?
- Rep. Malinowski characterized Mr. Pack's comments about spies as "paranoia" and claimed that Mr. Pack has done more damage to America's interests than spies could have. How does Mr. Pack respond?
- Grant Turner claimed that, rather than boosting morale, Mr. Pack's actions have had a "chilling" effect and "intimidated" USAGM journalists. How does Mr. Pack respond?
- Do Mr. Pack and/or USAGM have any other statement or comment they'd like to offer on today's HFAC hearing or the subpoena HFAC issued for Mr. Pack?

My deadline is 6:00 p.m. Thank you.

Best,

Marc Rod

Reporter, Jewish Insider

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
To: Jonathan Bronitsky
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: ICYMI - NBC News, NPR(updated), NYPost, Politico PM...Re: The Hill - Voice of America not extending foreign journalists' visas: report
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 2:43:43 PM

[Trump's new global media chief fires top editor at Radio Free Asia](#)

Since he was confirmed as CEO in a party-line vote, Pack has fired the heads of all 4 news outlets under his agency as well as the boards governing them.

July 9, 2020, 2:28 PM EDT

NBC News, By Dan De Luce

Media

[U.S. Broadcasting Agency Will Not Extend Visas For Its Foreign Journalists](#)

NPR, July 9, 2020 4:25 AM ET - **Updated at 2:00 p.m. ET**

David Folkenflik

Mark Katkov

[Voice of America won't extend visas for foreign journalists](#)

New York Post, By Bob Fredericks

July 9, 2020 | 12:53pm | Updated

[POLITICO Playbook PM](#)

July 9, 2020

-- ["U.S. Broadcasting Agency Will Not Extend Visas For Its Foreign Journalists,"](#) by NPR's David Folkenflik and Mark Katkov

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 12:20 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6) >
Subject: The Hill - Voice of America not extending foreign journalists' visas: report

[Voice of America not extending foreign journalists' visas: report](#)

THE HILL, BY [RAFAEL BERNAL](#) - 07/09/20 11:31 AM EDT

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: ICYMI - NPR & CPJ
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 7:59:16 AM

NPR | 3 HRS AGO

U.S. Broadcasting Agency Will Not Extend Visas For Its Foreign Journalists

NPR, WAMU 88.5 David Folkenflik, Mark Katkov, 7-9-20

Dozens of foreign nationals working as journalists in the U.S. for Voice of America, the federal government's international broadcaster, will not have their visas extended once they expire, according to three people with knowledge of the decision.

Those with knowledge of the decision say the new CEO of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, Michael Pack, signaled he will not approve the visa extensions. Also Wednesday, according to those with knowledge of the decision, Pack ordered the dismissal of former Radio Free Asia chief Bay Fang, whom Pack had previously demoted. The sources asked not to be identified because of a fear of retaliation.

<https://wamu.org/story/20/07/09/u-s-broadcasting-agency-will-not-extend-visas-for-its-foreign-journalists/>

CPJ sends letter to U.S. Agency for Global Media head encouraging unbiased coverage

July 8, 2020 4:16 PM EDT

<https://cpj.org/2020/07/cpj-sends-letter-to-u-s-agency-for-global-media-head-encouraging-unbiased-coverage/>

Sent from my iPhone

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: ICYMI - NYT, POLITICO, SLATE
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 8:22:45 PM

Trump Appointee Might Not Extend Visas for Foreign Journalists at V.O.A.

By [Pranshu Verma](#) and [Edward Wong](#)

NYT July 9, 2020 Updated 7:28 p.m. ET

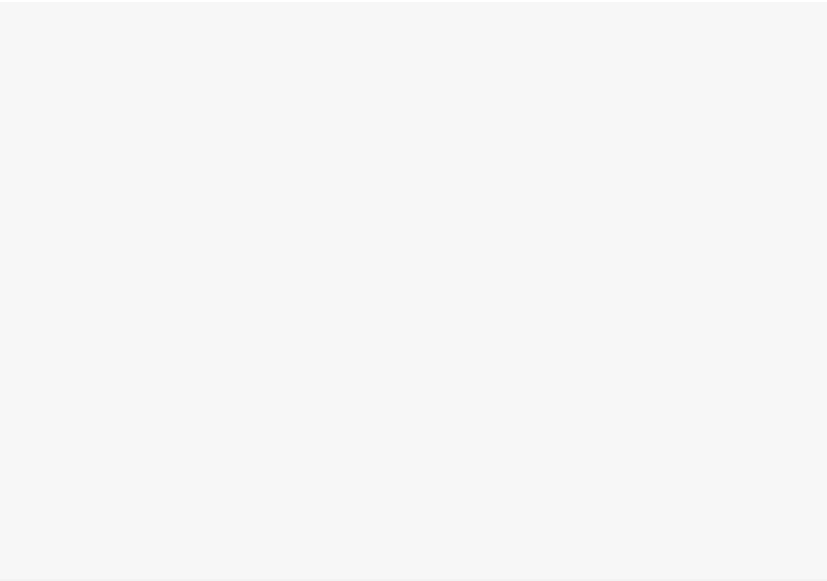
The action could be a blow to the news-gathering abilities of Voice of America, an independently operated media agency funded by the government.

WASHINGTON — As many as 100 foreign citizens working in the United States as journalists for the Voice of America, a government-funded news outlet, might not have their visas extended once they expire, according to people familiar with the planning.

Michael Pack, the new chief executive for the U.S. Agency for Global Media, has indicated he may not approve extensions for any journalist holding a J-1 visa, which allows foreign citizens to temporarily work in the United States in ways that promote cultural exchanges.

The decision could be a blow to the news-gathering and global-broadcasting abilities of the V.O.A., which operates independently but is funded by the government. Foreign journalists on the specialty visa are often recruited to work there because they are able to translate American news reports into difficult languages like Swahili or Mandarin and can do reporting using those languages.

“J-1 visas are a crucial tool for management to get the talent that is needed to run a complex multilingual news organization,” said David Ensor, a former director for the Voice of America. “That’s what V.O.A. is.”



In a statement, a spokesman for the U.S. Agency for Global Media said it was conducting a comprehensive assessment of those workers who hold J-1 visas. The move was meant to improve “agency management and protect U.S. national security,” he said, and to do so, it was “imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused.” The planning was described by people with knowledge of the discussions, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the actions were pending.

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The discussion on the visas, [first reported by NPR](#), follows the firing on Wednesday of Bay Fang, who became executive editor of Radio Free Asia after Mr. Pack removed her last month as president of the organization. She was asked to leave the organization by the acting president, Parameswaran Ponnudurai, who had recently met with Mr. Pack, according to people familiar with the actions. Ms. Fang was one of the chiefs of four U.S.-funded news organizations and a technology group whom Mr. Pack [removed on June 17](#), in a decision that angered Democratic and Republican lawmakers.

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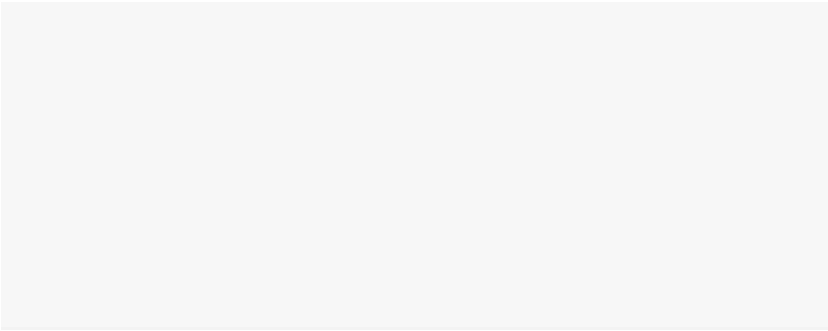
Those four organizations and V.O.A. are overseen by the global media agency. The director of V.O.A. and her deputy [resigned in June](#) after Mr. Pack was confirmed by the Senate.

Mr. Pack also dismissed the bipartisan boards of the organizations on June 17 and named successors, almost all of whom are Trump administration political appointees.

Last week, Mr. Pack also named James M. Miles, a former secretary of state for South Carolina, to lead [the Open Technology Fund](#), an internet freedom nonprofit under Mr. Pack's purview.

Mr. Miles is little known in the internet freedom community and his hiring was not accepted by the organization's staff, according to a letter the group's general counsel wrote to Mr. Pack, which was obtained by The New York Times.

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The actions by Mr. Pack have raised questions about the editorial independence of the news outlets under his management. Mr. Pack, a conservative filmmaker, is a close ally of Stephen K. Bannon, a former campaign strategist and White House adviser to President Trump who has [pressed Mr. Trump](#) to take charge of the government-funded news organizations and reshape them.

Mr. Bannon has also publicly criticized V.O.A., calling it “a rotten fish from top to bottom.”

Mr. Pack’s recent actions have been [challenged in the courts](#) by the Open Technology Fund. A federal judge ruled last week in Mr. Pack’s favor. The <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/09/us/politics/voice-of-america-visas-michael-pack.html> plaintiffs filed an appeal on Thursday.

Pranshu Verma reported from Washington, and Edward Wong from Lewes, Del.

POLITICO

FOREIGN POLICY

Cuba broadcaster confronts budget calamity amid fight with lawmakers

The Office of Cuba Broadcasting has become collateral damage in a struggle between Congress and its new boss.

By **DANIEL LIPPMAN**
07/09/2020 06:44 PM EDT

<https://www.politico.com/news/2020/07/09/cuba-broadcasting-budget-355591>

THE SLATEST

Voice of America's International Journalists Won't Have U.S. Visas Renewed

By HANNAH KLEIN

SLATE, JULY 09, 2020 5:46 PM

[HTTPS://SLATE.COM/NEWS-AND-POLITICS/2020/07/VOA-JOURNALISTS-VISA-RENEWAL.HTML](https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2020/07/voa-journalists-visa-renewal.html)

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Daniel Robinson](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Information Request
Date: Sunday, August 2, 2020 8:16:55 PM
Importance: High

Jonathan Bronitsky
Public Affairs
U.S. Agency for Global Media

Jonathan,

This is a request for information relating to a story BBG/USAGM Watch is preparing regarding OPM/ODNI assessments of agency failures to adequately vet staff and associated national security threats from years of deficiencies.

It's my understanding that USAGM plans to issue a statement on this subject on Tuesday. It would be helpful if you could confirm the timing of any such statement and clarify whether documentation, including the OPM report from 2020, will be formally released as part of this or whether this document should be considered as background for media.

I have the following questions -- the first three relate specifically to the security deficiency issues that are a matter of grave concern to Mr. Pack and his team:

- Were investigative authorities ever returned to the agency after their transfer to NBIB/DOD?
- What is new USAGM management's understanding of progress made by the agency as of this month toward re-investigating the 1,527 cases (OPM's report refers to 310 as of earlier this year)?
- What is the status of State Department OIG attention to the security issues identified in the OPM's 2020 report?
- Is Mr. Pack aware that long-running abuse of J-1 visa policy stretches throughout VOA and many language services?

Your assistance with responses would be greatly appreciated.

Daniel Robinson (b) (6)

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Inquiries: J-1 visas
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 7:01:00 PM

Hi, (b) (6)

FYA, re J-1-visa inquiries, I've been offering the following, attributable on background to a "USAGM spokesperson":

USAGM leadership is dedicated to ensuring that the agency has the resources needed to advance its mission and those of its networks and grantees. Given that the agency broadcasts internationally in over 60 languages, it appreciates the value of critical-language skills offered by U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. To improve agency management and protect U.S. national security, it is imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused. As such, USAGM is undertaking a comprehensive, case-by-case assessment of personal services contractors (PSCs) who are J-1 visa holders.

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Inquiry: USAGM / J-1 visas
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 6:57:00 PM

Hi, Barry.

Re your J-1-visa inquiry, the following is attributable on background to a "USAGM spokesperson":

USAGM leadership is dedicated to ensuring that the agency has the resources needed to advance its mission and those of its networks and grantees. Given that the agency broadcasts internationally in over 60 languages, it appreciates the value of critical-language skills offered by U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. To improve agency management and protect U.S. national security, it is imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused. As such, USAGM is undertaking a comprehensive, case-by-case assessment of personal services contractors (PSCs) who are J-1 visa holders.

Thanks for reaching out.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Lee, Matthew](#)
Subject: Inquiry: USAGM / J-1 visas
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 6:57:00 PM

Hi, Matthew.

Re your J-1-visa inquiry, the following is attributable on background to a "USAGM spokesperson":

USAGM leadership is dedicated to ensuring that the agency has the resources needed to advance its mission and those of its networks and grantees. Given that the agency broadcasts internationally in over 60 languages, it appreciates the value of critical-language skills offered by U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. To improve agency management and protect U.S. national security, it is imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused. As such, USAGM is undertaking a comprehensive, case-by-case assessment of personal services contractors (PSCs) who are J-1 visa holders.

Thanks for reaching out.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Inquiry: USAGM / J-1 visas
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 6:56:00 PM

Hi, Rafael.

Re your J-1-visa inquiry, the following is attributable on background to a "USAGM spokesperson":

USAGM leadership is dedicated to ensuring that the agency has the resources needed to advance its mission and those of its networks and grantees. Given that the agency broadcasts internationally in over 60 languages, it appreciates the value of critical-language skills offered by U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. To improve agency management and protect U.S. national security, it is imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused. As such, USAGM is undertaking a comprehensive, case-by-case assessment of personal services contractors (PSCs) who are J-1 visa holders.

Thanks for reaching out.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Ted Lipien](#)
Subject: Inquiry: USAGM / J-1 visas
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 6:55:00 PM

Hi, Ted.

Re your J-1-visa inquiry, the following is attributable on background to a “USAGM spokesperson”:

USAGM leadership is dedicated to ensuring that the agency has the resources needed to advance its mission and those of its networks and grantees. Given that the agency broadcasts internationally in over 60 languages, it appreciates the value of critical-language skills offered by U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. To improve agency management and protect U.S. national security, it is imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused. As such, USAGM is undertaking a comprehensive, case-by-case assessment of personal services contractors (PSCs) who are J-1 visa holders.

Thanks for reaching out.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Pranshu Verma](#)
Subject: Inquiry: USAGM / J-1 visas
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 6:54:00 PM

Hi, Pranshu.

Re your J-1-visa inquiry, the following is attributable on background to a “USAGM spokesperson”:

USAGM leadership is dedicated to ensuring that the agency has the resources needed to advance its mission and those of its networks and grantees. Given that the agency broadcasts internationally in over 60 languages, it appreciates the value of critical-language skills offered by U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. To improve agency management and protect U.S. national security, it is imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused. As such, USAGM is undertaking a comprehensive, case-by-case assessment of personal services contractors (PSCs) who are J-1 visa holders.

Thanks for reaching out.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Inquiry: USAGM / J-1 visas
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 6:53:00 PM

Hi, Julian.

Re your J-1-visa inquiry, the following is attributable on background to a "USAGM spokesperson":

USAGM leadership is dedicated to ensuring that the agency has the resources needed to advance its mission and those of its networks and grantees. Given that the agency broadcasts internationally in over 60 languages, it appreciates the value of critical-language skills offered by U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. To improve agency management and protect U.S. national security, it is imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused. As such, USAGM is undertaking a comprehensive, case-by-case assessment of personal services contractors (PSCs) who are J-1 visa holders.

Thanks for reaching out.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Farhi, Paul](#)
Subject: Inquiry: USAGM / J-1 visas
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 6:52:00 PM

Hi, Paul.

Re your J-1-visa inquiry, the following is attributable on background to a “USAGM spokesperson”:

USAGM leadership is dedicated to ensuring that the agency has the resources needed to advance its mission and those of its networks and grantees. Given that the agency broadcasts internationally in over 60 languages, it appreciates the value of critical-language skills offered by U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. To improve agency management and protect U.S. national security, it is imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused. As such, USAGM is undertaking a comprehensive, case-by-case assessment of personal services contractors (PSCs) who are J-1 visa holders.

Thanks for reaching out.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [David Folkenflik](#)
Subject: Inquiry: USAGM / J-1 visas
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 6:51:00 PM

Hi, David.

Re your J-1-visa inquiry, the following is attributable on background to a “USAGM spokesperson”:

USAGM leadership is dedicated to ensuring that the agency has the resources needed to advance its mission and those of its networks and grantees. Given that the agency broadcasts internationally in over 60 languages, it appreciates the value of critical-language skills offered by U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. To improve agency management and protect U.S. national security, it is imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused. As such, USAGM is undertaking a comprehensive, case-by-case assessment of personal services contractors (PSCs) who are J-1 visa holders.

Thanks for reaching out.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Inquiry: USAGM / J-1 visas
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 6:59:00 PM

Hi, Lindsey.

Re your J-1-visa inquiry, the following is attributable on background to a "USAGM spokesperson":

USAGM leadership is dedicated to ensuring that the agency has the resources needed to advance its mission and those of its networks and grantees. Given that the agency broadcasts internationally in over 60 languages, it appreciates the value of critical-language skills offered by U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. To improve agency management and protect U.S. national security, it is imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused. As such, USAGM is undertaking a comprehensive, case-by-case assessment of personal services contractors (PSCs) who are J-1 visa holders.

Thanks for reaching out.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

From: [CEO2016](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: J1/jewish insider
Date: Thursday, September 3, 2020 12:22:30 PM

My film editor got a call from mark rod requesting an interview about me. What is that about?
Do you recommend she talk to him?

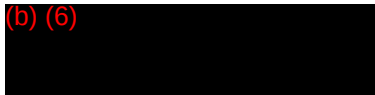
Let's get that j1 visa statement out today.

thanks.

mp

Michael Pack
Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Agency for Global Media

(b) (6)

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the majority of the content in this block, starting below the signature and extending to the right edge of the page.

From: [Quin Hillyer](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Tom Rogan](#)
Subject: Jonathan, Tom, meet each other
Date: Thursday, September 3, 2020 1:53:24 PM

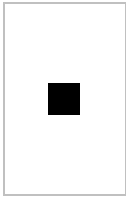
Tom,

I just had a good conversation with Michael Pack, who asked that you meet his communications director, Jonathan Bronitsky, copied herein, with a view to discussing your columns on the visas, etc., and if needed to set up a conversation with Michael. As I think quite highly of both you and Michael, I feel confident something good can come of this. Indeed, I feel quite confident y'all will like each other, and probably see eye to eye on most things anyway, even if not right now on this particular subject. I told Michael that your columns seem to make sense to me, and he said there are complications, etc. No need for me to be a middle-man, though.

Thanks, and best wishes,

Quin

--



<https://www.amazon.com/Mad-Jones-Heretic-Accidental-Prophet/dp/1947942255>

From: [China Channel LLC - Bonnie Girard](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Subject: Last Week's Article / Politico Article
Date: Thursday, October 1, 2020 9:15:03 PM
Attachments: [US Agency for Global Media Reopens Office of Internet Freedom Updated 092520.pdf](#)

Hi Jonathan & Mora,

I appreciate the clarifications you gave me for last week's article; we quickly updated the story, and the final product is attached.

Are you interested in giving your side of the article that was written in Politico yesterday? If so, I will find out if we can cover it. If the paper asks me to, I would like to come up and do it in person, if that would suit you.

Hoping you are both well, and thank you for working with me to get things right!

All the best,

Bonnie

Bonnie Girard

White House Correspondent - Freelance

(b) (6)

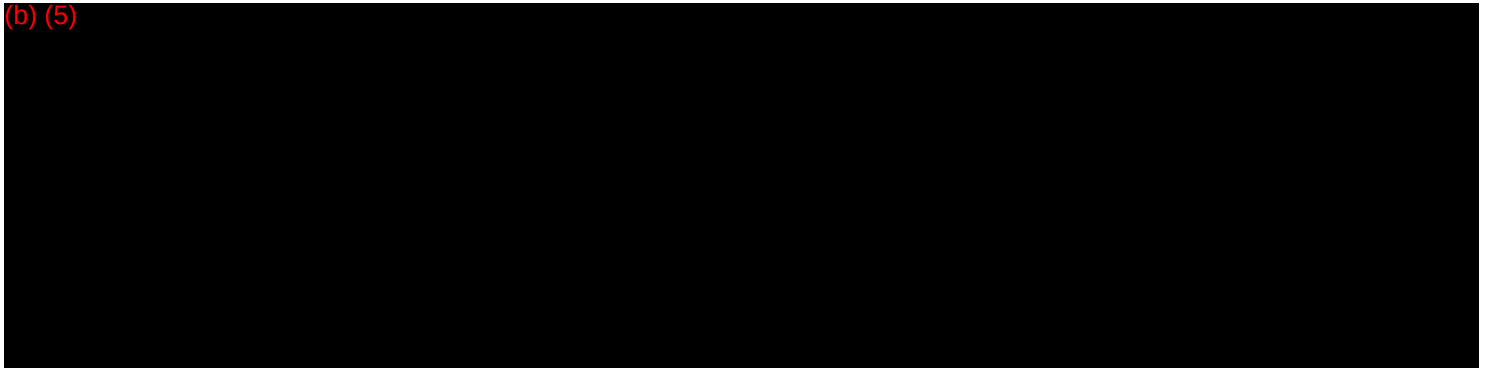
A large black rectangular redaction box covers the bottom portion of the email body, starting below the signature and extending to the bottom of the page.

From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: [Michael Pack](#)
Cc: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Diane Cullo](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Lawsuit Against USAGM You, and Most of Senior Staff
Date: Thursday, October 8, 2020 8:24:25 PM
Attachments: [Complaint, 20-cv-2885.pdf](#)
Importance: High

PRIVILEGED AND CONFIDENTIAL
ATTORNEY WORK PRODUCT
ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATION
PRE-DECISIONAL/DELIBERATIVE

Michael:

(b) (5)



Best,

Sam

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: log for September
Date: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 5:01:27 PM
Attachments: [Copy of POL - macro editorials - September 2020.xlsx](#)

Attached is the September log.

We are still waiting final clearance on:

Sanctions for Undermining Democratic Processes in Venezuela – sent 09/24

More U.S. Moves Against Forced Labor Goods from China – sent 09/29

To: [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 1:38:05 PM
Attachments: [Media - leadership - draft.docx](#)

To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Frank Wuco](#)
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 4:19:08 PM
Attachments: (b) (6) [RESUME SEPT. 2020.pdf](#)

To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020 11:14:17 AM
Attachments: [CEO memo - freeze on new spending - draft.docx](#)

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Cc: [Sam Dewey](#)
Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 12:29:00 PM
Attachments: [Messaging - NPR 09.02.20 - draft + edits.docx](#)

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Michael Lipin](#)
Date: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 9:49:51 PM

https://www.cjr.org/the_media_today/voice-of-america-staff-rebel-over-new-ceos-comments.php

[As NPR's David Folkenflik reported](#), the comments in question came during a podcast produced by the conservative website The Federalist, and included Pack [saying the agency was](#) "a great place to put a foreign spy," as well as joking about deporting his own employees and turning off the air conditioning or banning masks at VOA headquarters in order to help him "drain the swamp."

<https://www.npr.org/2020/08/31/907764105/voice-of-america-journalists-new-ceo-endangers-reporters-harms-u-s-aims>

During the half-hour conversation, [Pack joked with The Federalist's host, senior editor Chris Bedford](#), about deporting his own employees and forcing them to adopt unsafe workplace practices that could expose them to COVID-19. Pack said the agency was ripe for espionage and possibly rife with spies.

=====

Chris asked Michael to outline the personnel composition of USAGM:

MP: "One of the challenges of taking over an agency at this moment in time is sorting all this out, especially during COVID. The headquarters building – the Cohen Building here in Washington, DC – is largely empty. We're bringing people back as we move from Phase I..."

CB: [INTERJECTION] "Have you considered banning masks and turning off the air conditioning? That's my prescription for federal agencies."

MP: [SEGUE] "Yeah, well, we'll have to look into that one. But you know it's been hard to get to know the employees when they're largely working from home. But there are about 4,000 over all the broadcasters, so it's a lot of people and their backgrounds are mixed. I've met some really great ones and some very passionate ones. And people who still, for instance on the China example, are deeply upset about the country getting worse and worse and want to do something about it and want to get the truth to their fellow countrymen who are living under this kind of oppression. It's a noble thing, and there are journalists who are risking their lives who are working for us. We have journalists in Hong Kong that were threatened, and they're threatened all the time. There are a lot of journalists who are heroically motivated by a desire to get the truth to these areas, and I think they need to be celebrated. I don't want to downplay that, and they're heroic."

Chris asked Michael about USAGM's security situation:

MP: "I have a responsibility to make sure that the security of these agencies is maintained. The fact is that foreign intelligence agencies from the beginning – from the creation of these agencies – have been interested in penetrating them. To be a journalist is a great cover for a spy – famous journalists like Kim Philby who worked for the BBC... It's just a great cover. And from the beginning of the Cold War, even earlier, they've been penetrated. It [the field of journalism] is a great place to put a foreign spy. I have to make sure that doesn't happen – to stand up for the national security interests of Americans."

Also, re their claims involving "joking about deporting his own employees":

MP: "We are doing everything we can to cure this as quickly as we can, and part of that is we have J-1 visas for some foreign journalists that we are supposed to approve yearly. We have been rubberstamping them and not putting them through an approval process. But I'm legally obligated to do that. So I can't just give – even if they're lovely people – a J-1 visa without going through the process, or I'd be potentially endangering the security of America. So I am anxious to fix this as quickly as I can. I feel this was a mess dumped on me by senior management over a long period of time. I was not told about it during my long wait for confirmation or even the two months I was there by existing staff. It's a huge problem – I'm working hard to fix it."

Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 1:29:57 PM
Attachments: [USAGM Style Guide - November Draft + edits.docx](#)

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Date: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 7:34:00 PM

“We are doing everything we can to cure this as quickly as we can, and part of that is we have J-1 visas for some foreign journalists that we are supposed to approve yearly. We have been rubberstamping them and not putting them through an approval process. But I’m legally obligated to do that. So I can’t just give – even if they’re lovely people – a J-1 visa without going through the process, or I’d be potentially endangering the security of America. So I am anxious to fix this as quickly as I can. I feel this was a mess dumped on me by senior management over a long period of time. I was not told about it during my long wait for confirmation or even the two months I was there by existing staff. It’s a huge problem – I’m working hard to fix it.”

To: (b) (6)
Cc: [Sam Dewey](#)
Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 12:28:54 PM
Attachments: [Messaging - NPR 09.02.20 - draft + edits.docx](#)

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Michael Lipin](#)
Date: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 9:49:51 PM

https://www.cjr.org/the_media_today/voice-of-america-staff-rebel-over-new-ceos-comments.php

[As NPR's David Folkenflik reported](#), the comments in question came during a podcast produced by the conservative website The Federalist, and included Pack [saying the agency was](#) "a great place to put a foreign spy," as well as joking about deporting his own employees and turning off the air conditioning or banning masks at VOA headquarters in order to help him "drain the swamp."

<https://www.npr.org/2020/08/31/907764105/voice-of-america-journalists-new-ceo-endangers-reporters-harms-u-s-aims>

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To: [CEO2016](#)
Cc: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Thad Strom](#)
Date: Friday, October 23, 2020 5:48:45 PM
Attachments: [CEO - responsibilities - draftv2 + edits.docx](#)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Date: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 7:34:04 PM

“We are doing everything we can to cure this as quickly as we can, and part of that is we have J-1 visas for some foreign journalists that we are supposed to approve yearly. We have been rubberstamping them and not putting them through an approval process. But I’m legally obligated to do that. So I can’t just give – even if they’re lovely people – a J-1 visa without going through the process, or I’d be potentially endangering the security of America. So I am anxious to fix this as quickly as I can. I feel this was a mess dumped on me by senior management over a long period of time. I was not told about it during my long wait for confirmation or even the two months I was there by existing staff. It’s a huge problem – I’m working hard to fix it.

To: [Thad Strom](#)
Cc: [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
Date: Friday, October 23, 2020 5:47:52 PM
Attachments: [CEO - responsibilities - draftv2 + edits.docx](#)

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Date: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 1:11:00 PM
Attachments: [Package - security - draft.docx](#)

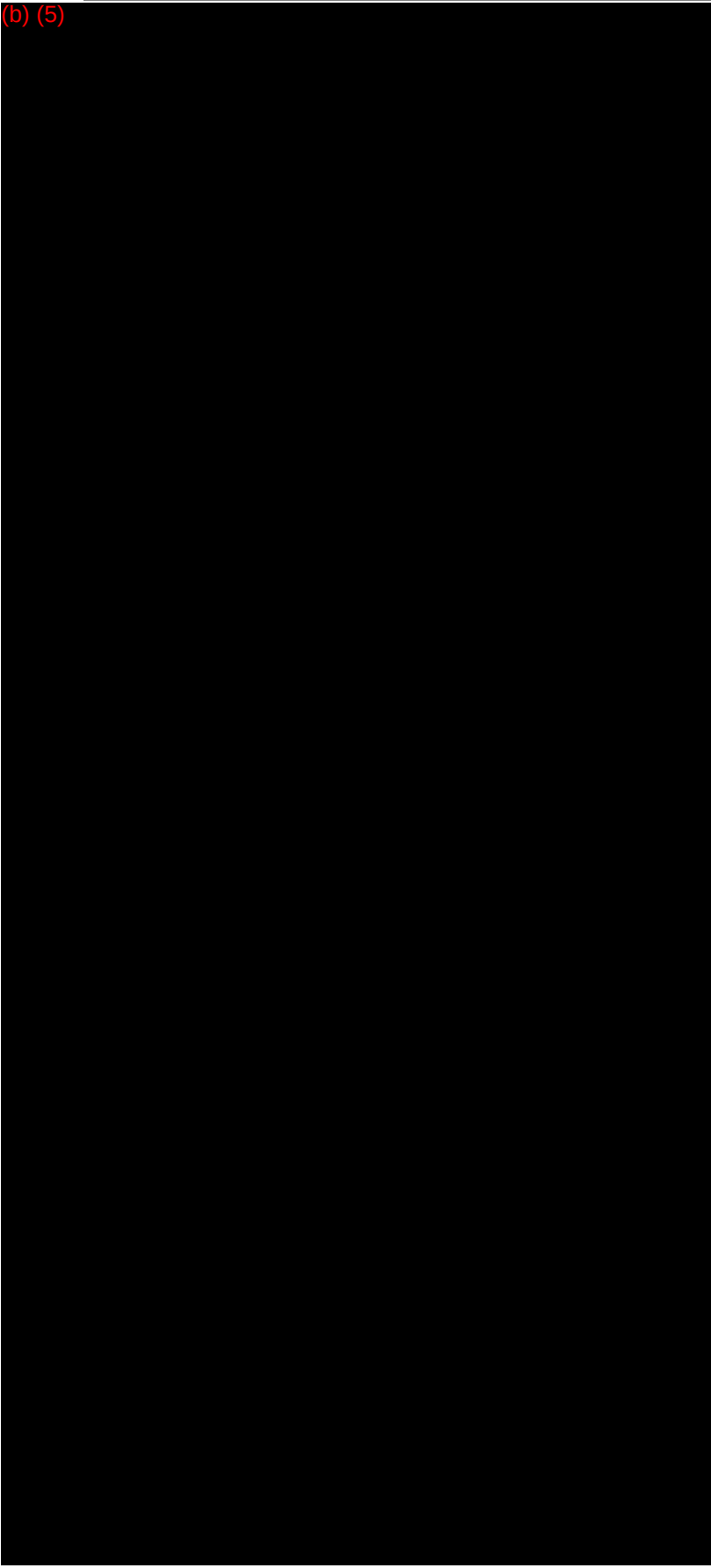
PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

To: [Frank Wuco](#)
Date: Monday, August 3, 2020 1:50:41 PM
Attachments: [Atch 2_OPM 2019 Final Report of USAGM Assessment.pdf](#)

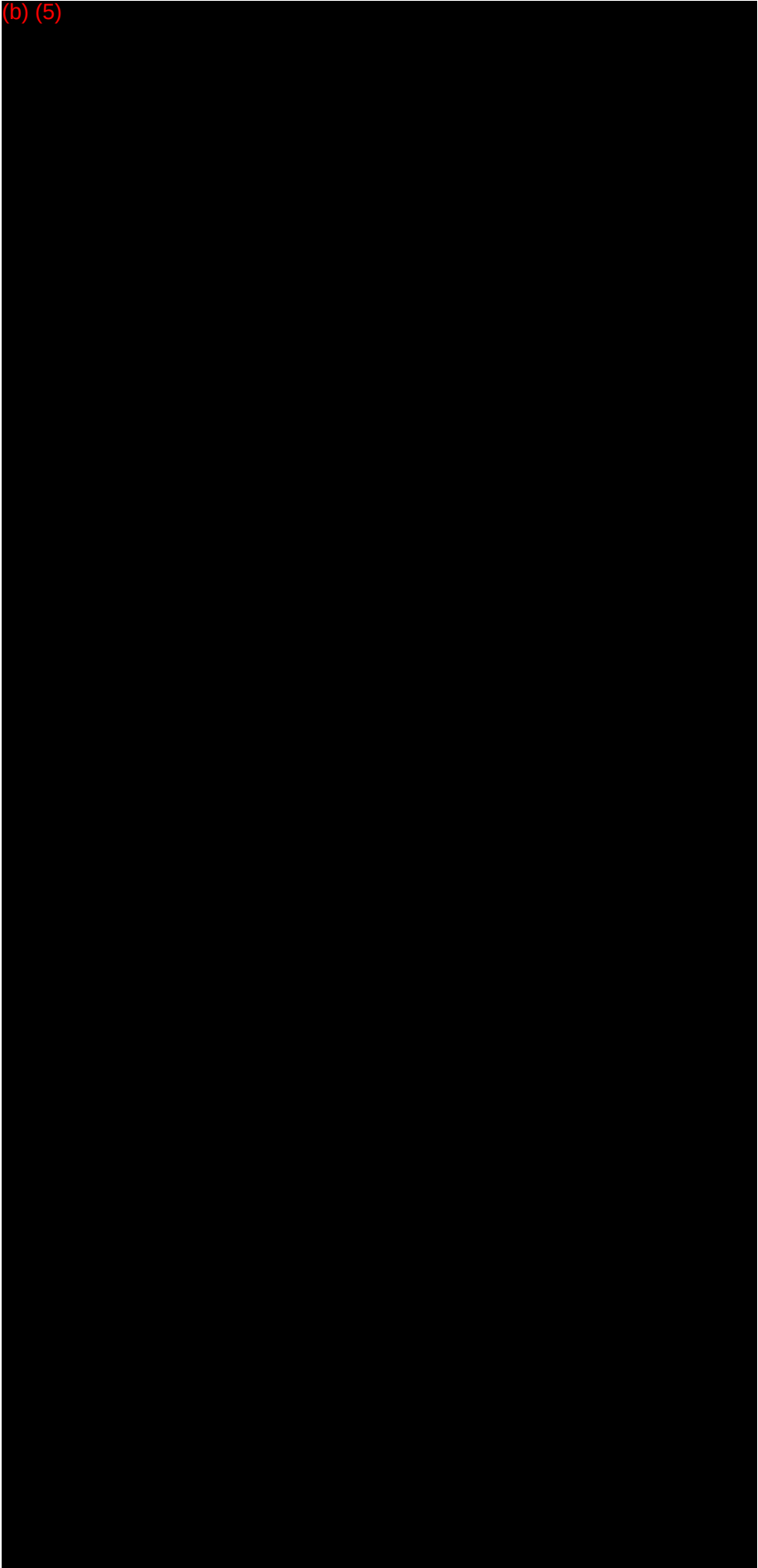
Date:

Saturday, October 10, 2020 11:44:02 PM

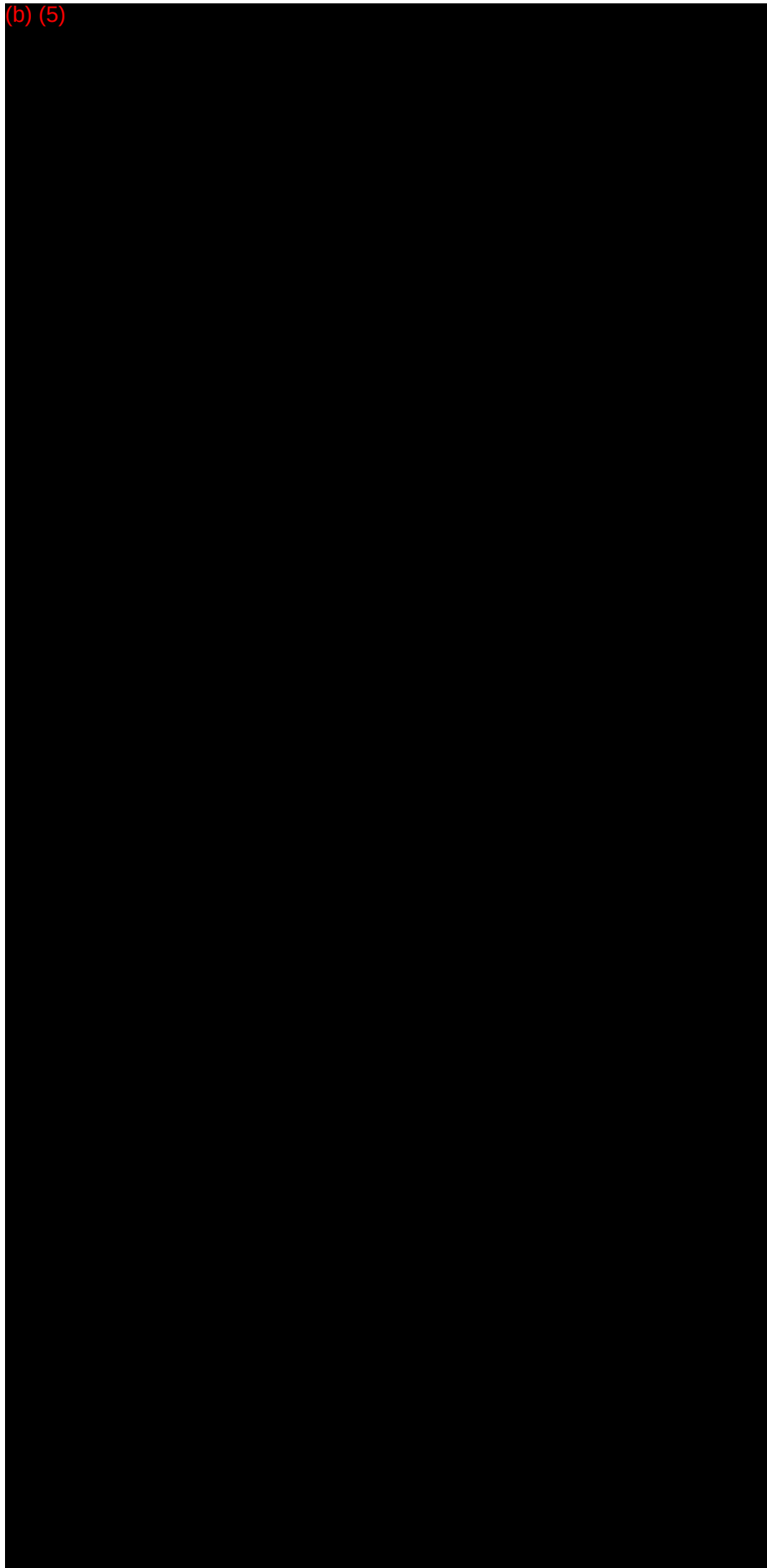
(b) (5)



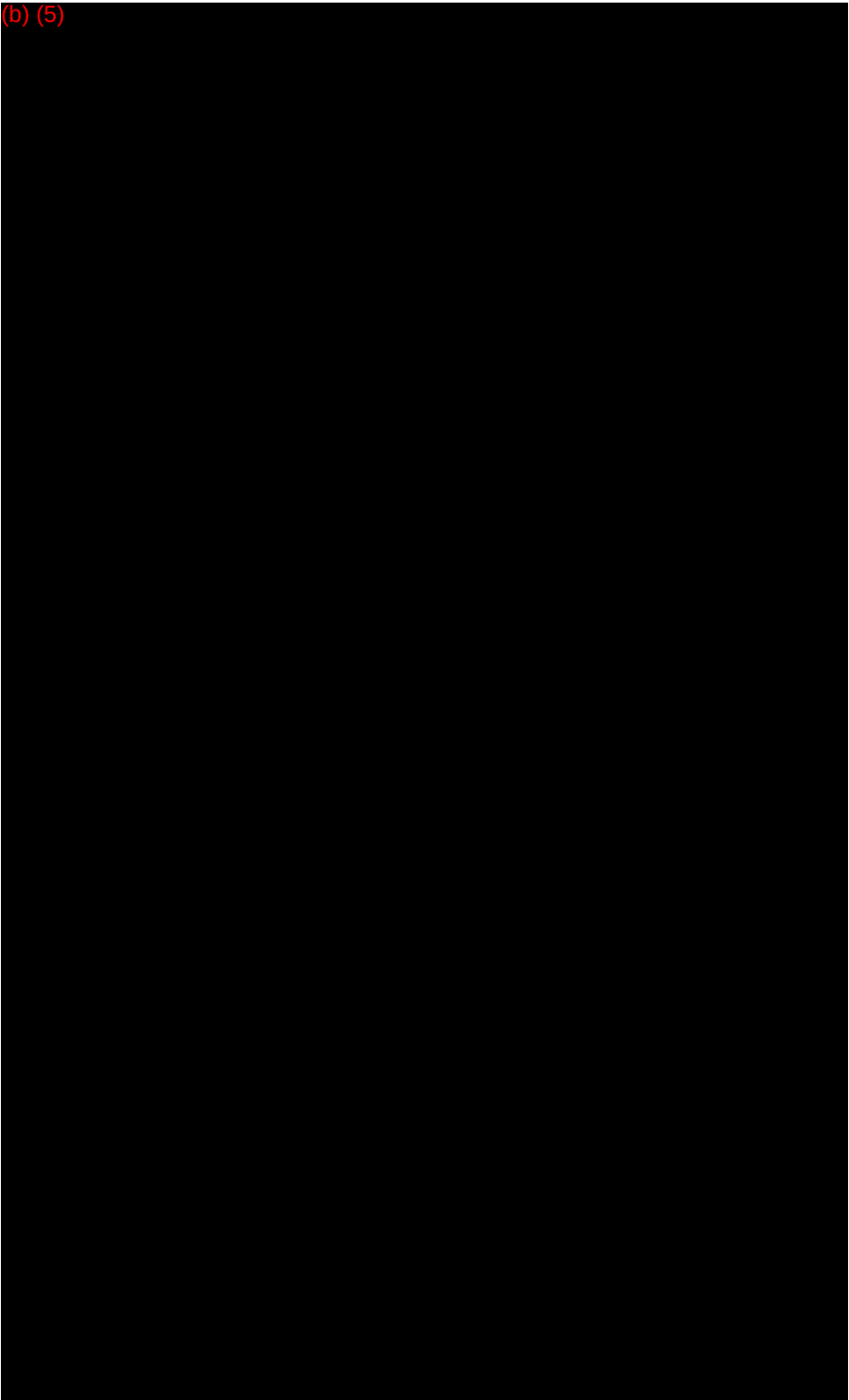
(b) (5)



(b) (5)



(b) (5)



To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Diane Cullo](#)
Date: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 4:19:27 PM
Attachments: [Response - JPKIII - draft.docx](#)

From: [Abby Bird](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Date: Friday, September 18, 2020 9:38:21 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[SS docs \(draft redactions\).pdf](#)

Pre-decisional and deliberative

(b) (6)

Special Assistant and Director of Executive Office Operations
Office of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Office: (b) (6) | Mobile: (b) (6) | Email: (b) (6)



U.S. Agency for Global Media
330 Independence Ave. SW | Washington, DC 20237
<http://usagm.gov>

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From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Date: Sunday, August 2, 2020 11:14:15 AM

There wasn't just a digital video. There was a radio news broadcast in Urdu language also, written along the same lines of the Urdu script that was published over the video. ... it is not only broadcast over radio stations in Pakistan but also is published on Facebook. And that broadcast is still available on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/voaurdu/videos/1228690850797475/>

The report starts at 9:09. (b) (6): editor; (b) (6) presenter / producer. Also the idea /assignment for that video was floated from the digital editor over a phone call. (b) (6) avoids writing emails for several things on daily basis and prefers phone. ... (b) (6) is known for (b) (6) religiously conservative views and association with Islamic groups and orgs in Pakistan. (b) (6) assigned the story. And (b) (6) is nowhere in the picture. ... The other two contractors are already those who were hired and promoted by the urdu service chief and the digital editing manager ... They are without any prior experience of journalism and were hired without any job openings or anything. Rather they were called from Pakistan in 2018 and 2019 on a J1 visa and were given higher pay scales and higher designations of managers.

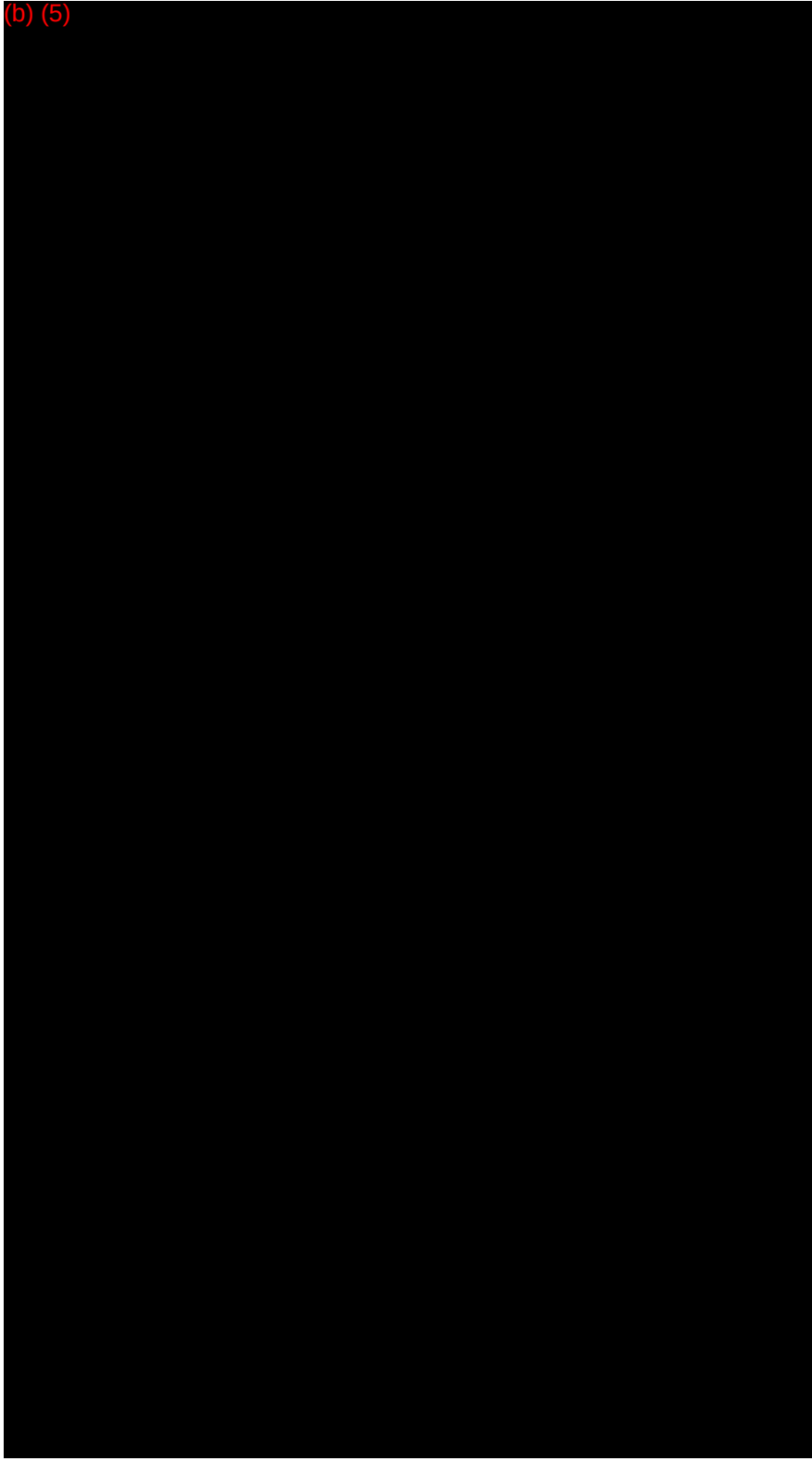
To: [CEO2016](#); (b) (6)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#); [Kellie Boyle](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Date: Thursday, January 14, 2021 12:43:28 PM
Attachments: [USAGM - OIG-OTF referral - draft.docx](#)

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Sam Dewey](#)
Date: Saturday, October 10, 2020 11:46:00 PM

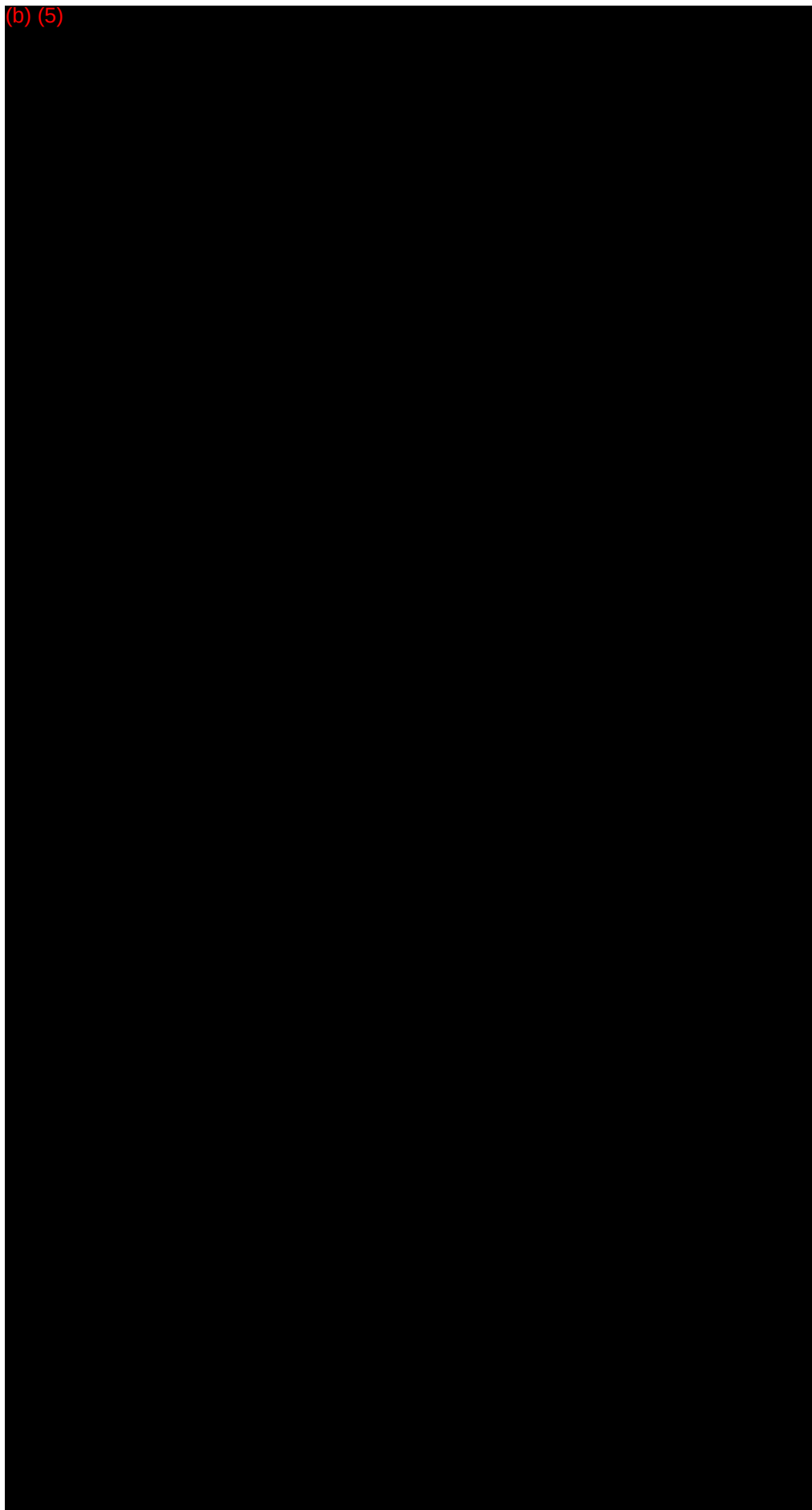
PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-
MP

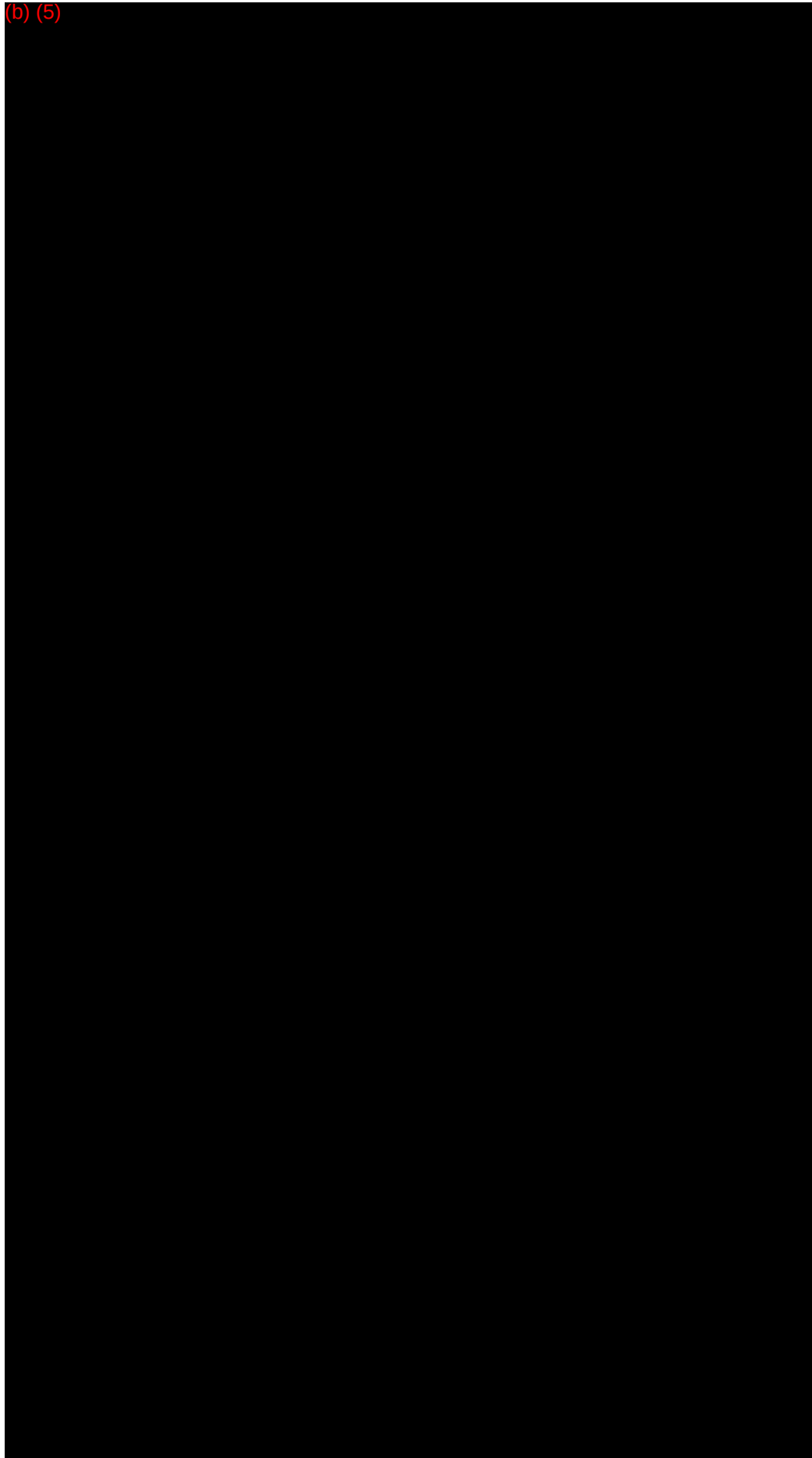
(b) (5)



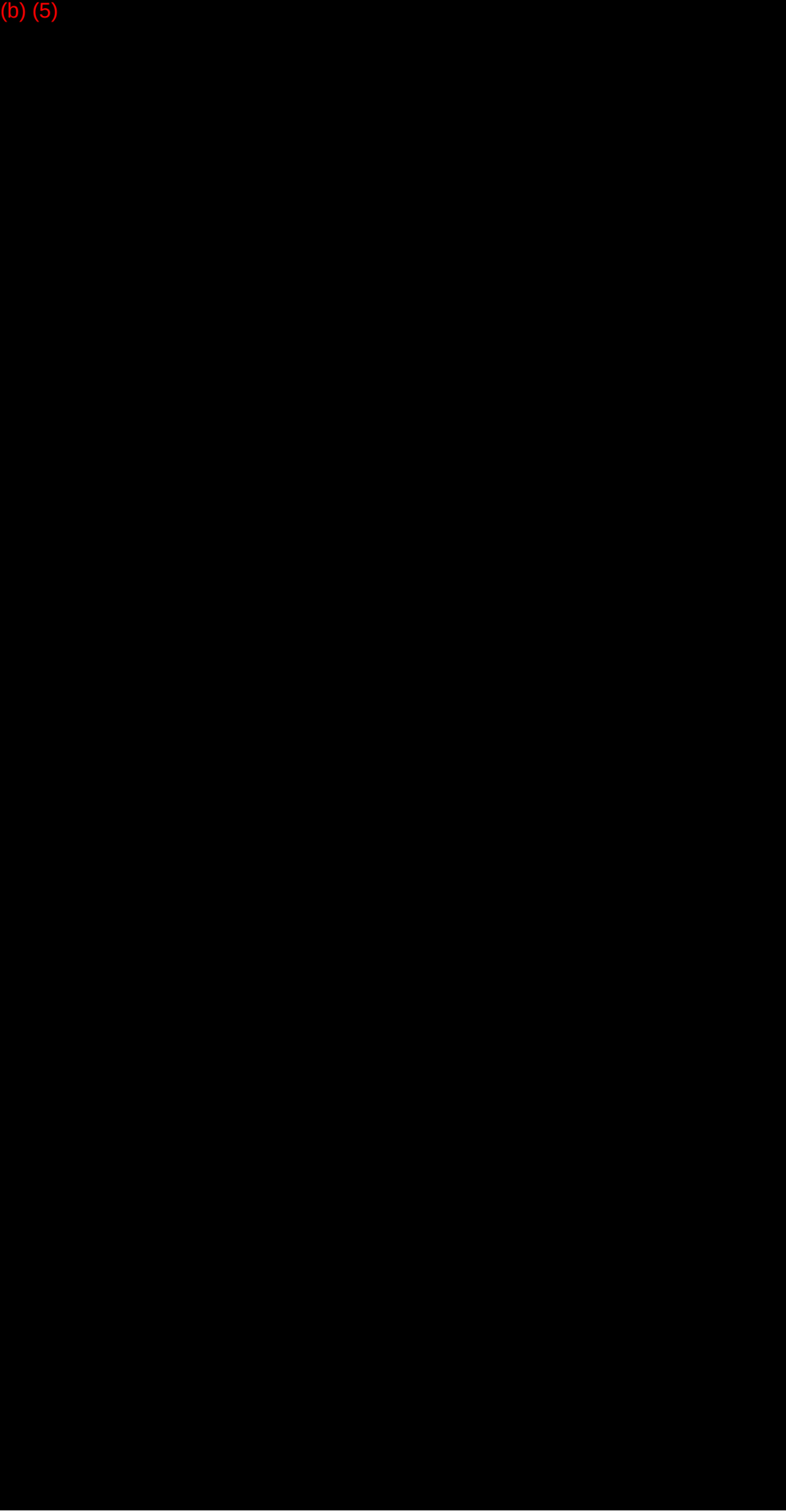
(b) (5)



(b) (5)



(b) (5)



(b) (5)



From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Date: Friday, January 1, 2021 3:30:56 PM
Attachments: [CEO memo - security issues - draft \(SED Edits\).docx](#)
[CEO memo - spending review - draft \(SED edits\).docx](#)
[CEO memo - journalistic independence - draft \(SED edits\).docx](#)
[CEO memo - consolidation - draft \(SED Edits\).docx](#)

PRIVILEGED AND CONFIDENTIAL
ATTORNEY WORK PRODUCT
ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATION
PRE-DECISIONAL/DELIBERATIVE

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 4:15:35 PM
Attachments: (b) (6) [RESUME SEPT. 2020.pdf](#)

From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2020 10:33:51 PM
Attachments: [Declaration of John Doe 10.13.20.pdf](#)
[Declaration of John Roe 10.13.20.pdf](#)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Frank Wuco](#); [Diane Cullo](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Date: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 10:08:15 AM
Attachments: [Addressing Disinformation Insights and Best Practices 2020 Final.pdf](#)
[image001.png](#)

FYI

(b) (6)
Special Assistant
U.S. Agency for Global Media
w) (b) (6)
c) (b) (6)



U.S. Agency for Global Media
330 Independence Ave. SW | Washington, DC 20237
<http://usagm.gov>

To: [Sam Dewey](#); [Frank Wuco](#)
Date: Friday, September 18, 2020 4:56:55 PM
Attachments: [SS docs \(draft redactions\).pdf](#)

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
Subject: Matt Pottinger
Date: Friday, June 19, 2020 12:12:00 PM

Matthew Pottinger is an American former journalist and [U.S. Marine Corps](#) officer who has served as the [United States Deputy National Security Advisor](#) since September 22, 2019.

Early life^[edit]

Pottinger is the son of author and former Department of Justice official [J. Stanley Pottinger](#).^[2] He was educated at [Milton Academy](#) and is a schoolmate and childhood friend of fellow journalist [John Avlon](#).^{[3][4][5]} Pottinger graduated from the [University of Massachusetts Amherst](#) with an undergraduate degree in [Chinese studies](#); he is fluent in [Mandarin](#).^[6]

Journalistic career^[edit]

Before he joined the [United States Marine Corps](#), Pottinger worked as a journalist for [Reuters](#) between 1998 and 2001.^{[7][2]} Then he moved to [The Wall Street Journal](#) until his retirement from journalism in 2005.^[2] His stories won awards from the Society of Publishers in Asia and were nominated for the [Pulitzer Prize](#). He covered a variety of topics, including the [SARS epidemic](#) and the [2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami](#); in the latter assignment, he met United States Marines and was inspired by their courage.^{[7][2]} He spent seven years reporting in [China](#).^{[8][9]}

Military career^[edit]

In September 2005 Pottinger joined the Marine Corps and served as a [military intelligence](#) officer.^[2] He was over-aged and out of shape when he joined. To meet the physical qualifications, he worked out with a Marine officer who was living in Beijing.^[2] He served three deployments: one in [Iraq](#) from April to November 2007, and two in [Afghanistan](#) from November 2008 to May 2009 and July 2009 to May 2010.^[10] On his second tour in Afghanistan, he met [U.S. Army](#) General [Michael T. Flynn](#), with whom he co-wrote a report.^{[2][11]} The report, published in January 2010 through the [Center for a New American Security](#), was titled *Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan*.^[12] After he left active service, Pottinger worked in [New York City](#), including for the hedge fund [Davidson Kempner Capital Management](#).^[2]

Political career^[edit]

A 2018 [Politico](#) profile described Pottinger as "a fairly typical conservative internationalist" who "has never been a Trump-style #MAGA conservative" and who donated to both Democrats and Republicans.^[13] In 2017, he was hired as a member of the [U.S. National Security Council](#) of the [administration](#) of [Donald Trump](#).^{[14][15][16]} Michael Flynn, whom Pottinger had worked for in the military, made him the NSC's Asia director, and he remained in his position under [H. R. McMaster](#) and [John R. Bolton](#).

In 2018, after a proposed summit with North Korea had been cancelled,^[17] *The New York Times*

reported that "a senior White House official told reporters that even if the meeting were reinstated, holding it on June 12 would be impossible, given the lack of time and the amount of planning needed."^{[18][19]} The President subsequently alleged that the *New York Times* had made up the existence of the unnamed White House official;^[20] on Twitter, journalist [Yashar Ali](#) later posted audio of Pottinger giving the officially organized background briefing cited by the *Times*,^[21] in which, without actually using the word "impossible", he responded to a reporter's question about the feasibility of the originally scheduled date by saying "We've lost quite a bit of time that we would need" and "June 12th is in ten minutes."^{[22][13]}

In his NSC position, Pottinger advocated a tough stance on China that combined trade policy with national security.^{[13][23]} In September 2019, newly installed National Security Advisor [Robert C. O'Brien](#) named Pottinger [Deputy National Security Advisor](#).^[24]

Personal life^[edit]

Pottinger is married to Dr. Yen Pottinger and has two children.^[25]

U.S.

Meet Captain Matt Pottinger, United States Marine Corps

PETER OSNOS

April 5, 2011



Matt Pottinger is a sandy-haired, 37-year-old man whose easy manner and charm provide cover for a remarkable biography and a very important set of messages about the wars the United States is fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. After a tour in Iraq as an intelligence officer with an infantry battalion in the initial troop surge and two tours in Afghanistan, including as adviser to a senior general with whom he collaborated on a controversial paper critical of intelligence gathering, Pottinger is now on "individual ready reserve." He is this year's Edward R. Murrow Fellow at The Council on Foreign Relations, which is intended to give returning foreign correspondents a chance to reflect on their years abroad. Pottinger qualifies for the fellowship because he joined the Marines in 2005 after a decade as a reporter, which culminated in his work at the Beijing bureau of the *Wall Street Journal*. As a respected reporter, he traveled widely in the Chinese countryside and covered the horrific tsunami in South Asia in 2004.

Pottinger was 32 when he decided to join the Marines, years older than most entrants to Officer Candidate School, and he spent months in Beijing getting his body in shape. Marine OCS is a grueling process intended--explicitly--to force out as many of the young men as possible (women are trained separately) so that those who complete the 10 weeks of boot camp are considered ready for the next stage of training and ultimately deployment to the war zones. Pottinger says that 40 percent of his class at OCS left before it was over. Having made the commitment to serve, Pottinger had to submerge many of the traits that brought him to the Marines in the first place. "I learned to be very, very humble," he said in one of our conversations, accepting the notion that he had to endure the torments of experienced Marine drill instructors to gain the mental and physical toughness that are essential qualities for leadership. The independent thinking that good correspondents develop had to be replaced with unquestioning obedience to rapid-fire commands.

As an undergraduate at the University of Massachusetts, Pottinger studied Chinese, which was how he landed at Reuters and the *Wall Street Journal*. While his journalism career was progressing, Pottinger started to develop an idealized role the U.S. military could play in global conflicts. Covering the tsunami, for instance, he encountered the enormous humanitarian contribution being made by Americans, including Marine units returning from Iraq deployments. In China, he came up against police state excesses, especially when he traveled to demonstrations in the countryside. Long hours being interrogated by local authorities reinforced his sense that he should find a way to serve American democratic principles, even as he understood that these were often undermined by realities on the ground in war zones. After his basic and infantry training, Pottinger became an intelligence specialist. While on stand down in Okinawa after his first Afghanistan tour, Pottinger's reports caught the attention of top commanders, and he was recruited to work with Maj. Gen. Michael T. Flynn, then the deputy chief of staff for intelligence under Gen. Stanley McChrystal.

I cannot do justice to the development of Pottinger's ideas in snippets from several interviews, but fortunately, as he closed out his second Afghan tour, he was co-author with Flynn and Paul D. Batchelor of the Defense Intelligence Agency of an [extensive analysis](#) called "Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan." The unclassified report was eventually released by the Center for a New American Security, a Washington think tank. It attracted both accolades for its candor and criticism from those, especially in the Pentagon, who challenged its judgments. Pottinger's personal appraisal about the inadequacies of intelligence, as I heard him describe them, reflect his background as a journalist. The best of reporting, he says, even in this digital age, comes from experienced print journalists who take the time to embed with military units in the field and, when they can, in local communities. Their stories can provide senior officers with a coherent sense of the situation in contested areas that often goes beyond the collated data

that makes its way through the bureaucracy to policymakers.

Recently, Pottinger [spoke](#) to students at the [Miller Center for Public Affairs at the University of Virginia](#) in which he described in compelling detail why he joined the Marines and what he had learned in his three combat tours. Iraq and Afghanistan are now among America's longest wars. Moreover, with turbulence spreading across the Middle East and North Africa, particularly the Libyan military operation, it is next to impossible to gauge the long-term consequences of America's intervention in the region. But a defining characteristic of these conflicts, as distinct from the Vietnam era, is that even critics of the wars show respect for the young men and women who have volunteered to fight in them.

Pottinger is still absorbing the experience of his years at war. He is a recipient of the Bronze Star and other decorations. As a reserve officer, he can be called up at any time. You may not agree with everything Pottinger says about these conflicts, and my sense is that there are those in the Pentagon who think he has been too outspoken in his papers and public appearances. But he has served his country bravely. He is now reporting back to those of us who remain uneasy about the outcome of these wars without clear endpoints. I salute Capt. Matt Pottinger and hope our leaders and the public can take advantage of his insights. He has earned the right to those views at great risk to himself and out of devotion to American ideals.

[Politics](#)

Matthew Pottinger faced Communist China's intimidation as a reporter. He's now at the White House shaping Trump's hard line policy toward Beijing.

In February, as President Trump was projecting confidence that China's Xi Jinping had the [coronavirus](#) under control, his deputy national security adviser Matthew Pottinger received some alarming information. The virus was spreading beyond China's borders, and so, U.S. officials warned, was a disinformation campaign from the Communist Party in Beijing.

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Chinese leaders, Pottinger believed, were engaging in a massive coverup and a "psychological warfare" operation to obscure the origins of the virus and deflect blame, according to people with knowledge of his thinking. U.S. intelligence officials were picking up signs that Chinese operatives were deliberately sowing disinformation, including state media manipulating stories to change key facts, the people said.

Pottinger urged Trump and other senior officials to brand the virus with a label so that there would be no mistaking its origins: the Wuhan virus.

The episode illustrates the quiet but potent influence of the White House's foremost China expert, whose personal experience as a journalist in that country two decades ago left him deeply distrustful of the regime in Beijing and is now shaping the administration's hard line posture.

Pottinger's push to use the term "Wuhan virus" has reverberated. Trump, eager to deflect blame over [his own handling of the virus](#), escalated the rhetoric by using "Chinese virus." Secretary of State Mike Pompeo [angered allies](#) in March when he pressured Group of Seven nations to sign a collective statement employing "Wuhan virus," a demand they refused. Liberals called the language racist.

To Pottinger, the critics missed the point: China's state media had named the virus for Wuhan for weeks before suddenly pressuring the World Health Organization to formally name it covid-19. Beijing needed to own it.

Pottinger believes Beijing's handling of the virus has been "catastrophic" and "the whole world is the collateral damage of China's internal governance problems," said a person familiar with his thinking, who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss his views.

After first joining the Trump administration in 2017 as senior director of the National Security Council's Asia division, Pottinger, 46, is now a pivotal player in the Trump administration's attempts to reorient U.S. policy on China toward a more confrontational approach, according to multiple people familiar with his role.

In 2017, he helped craft the administration's national security strategy document that formally named China as [a strategic competitor](#), labeling Beijing a "revisionist power."

In private, Pottinger has described Xi as steering China's authoritarian system toward a more dangerous "totalitarianism," seeking to implement Orwellian-style controls over most aspects of society.

In an interview last fall, H.R. McMaster, who served as Trump's second national security adviser, called Pottinger "central to the biggest shift in U.S. foreign policy since the Cold War, which is the competitive approach to China."

Pottinger declined to comment on his role. The White House declined to comment.

Since the earliest days of the pandemic's arrival in the United States, Pottinger has been conferring with his older brother Paul, a virologist at the University of Washington who treated patients stricken in the country's first viral outbreak, according to people familiar with their conversations. He has passed on those front-line observations to the White House coronavirus task force led by Vice President Pence.

It was Pottinger who first proposed to Trump a plan to shut down some flights from China in late January, the people said. In March, he led a review that culminated in the State Department [slashing the number of visas for Chinese journalists](#) under the rationale that they worked for state-backed propaganda outlets at a time when Beijing

was cracking down on foreign reporters. China went on to expel journalists from U.S. publications, including The Washington Post.

Pottinger also supported Trump's decision this month to [freeze U.S. funding to the WHO](#) over charges that it failed to hold China to account and muzzled Taiwan's earlier warnings in December about the virus that started in China. He is overseeing an internal administration review to present options to the president for how to proceed.

His influence has limits. Pottinger is among a disparate group of advisers promoting often contradictory approaches toward China, which, along with Trump's own competing impulses, have created a whiplash effect on U.S. policy.

The consequences are playing out in real time as the two world powers have clashed, hampering the international response to the global health and economic emergency. Late last month, Trump and Xi held a phone call to de-escalate tensions, pledging to cooperate on global supply chains.

They eased off the most inflammatory rhetoric, but Trump's move to punish the WHO has alarmed global health officials who are concerned it could hamper international coordination.

Behind the scenes, Pottinger has pushed intelligence agencies to explore [the theory](#), popular among conservatives, that the pathogen was accidentally released by a virology lab in Wuhan, rather than a wild animal market. So far, that theory has not been proved, but Pottinger believes there is more circumstantial evidence in favor of the lab explanation, said people with knowledge of his views.

He and like-minded State Department aides have warned outside China experts, who had criticized the administration's use of "Wuhan virus," that they should remain skeptical of Beijing's motives. Their message amounted to a warning that more damaging information would come out about Beijing's handling of the pandemic, according to four people on the calls.

In [a Foreign Affairs essay](#) last month, Kurt M. Campbell, who served as a high-level Asia policy official in the Obama administration, wrote that the Trump administration should seek avenues of cooperation with China during the pandemic rather than "getting consumed by a war of narratives about who responded better."

"Most countries coping with the challenge would rather see a public message that stresses the seriousness of a shared global challenge and possible paths forward," Campbell and co-author Rush Doshi wrote. "And there is much Washington and Beijing could do together for the world's benefit."

Covering the regime

Pottinger arrives for the opening ceremony of the Belt and Road Forum at the China National Convention Center in Beijing on May 14, 2017. (Mark Schiefelbein/AP)

Pottinger, who has a wife and two children, was not well known among Washington's

foreign policy elite when he joined the Trump administration, but government service runs in the family. His father, Stanley, served in the civil rights division in the Justice Department in the Nixon and Ford administrations.

The journalist Bob Woodward has said Stanley Pottinger discovered that FBI official Mark Felt was the Deep Throat source of Watergate fame during an unrelated federal prosecution in 1976. Stanley informed his teenage son of the secret after Matthew asked him to arrange a phone call with Woodward to explore his interest in journalism, associates said.

But Stanley never revealed Felt's identity to his son.

Pottinger learned his own lessons about the sanctity of sources and the dangers of a paranoid government as a journalist in China, working for Reuters, then the Wall Street Journal in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

In a personal essay for the Journal in 2005, he [described](#) being videotaped by Chinese police, flushing notes down a toilet to hide them from authorities and being roughed up "by a government goon" at a Starbucks in Beijing.

In the early 2000s, Pottinger covered the SARS outbreak, and in 2004, after the virus had been largely contained, he wrote a story for the Journal about a small resurgence tied to a safety accident at a lab — an event that associates said colors his views of the current crisis.

Paul Eckert, a former Reuters journalist who worked with Pottinger in China, said Pottinger was among the many correspondents who "tend to sour on China. On a deeper level, you have affection for the culture and people. But then the regime gets to you over time."

Pottinger's fears of Beijing's efforts to control information have influenced his work at the White House. Last year, he was among a cohort of NSC aides who helped shepherd Trump's decision to place Huawei, a giant Chinese telecom equipment-making firm that provides 5G networks, on [the Commerce Department's entity list](#), making it very difficult for U.S. companies to do business with it.

At [a forum in India](#) in January, Pottinger explained the action by citing the company's unfair Chinese government subsidies. But the real threat, he said, was that allowing Huawei into the country would be akin to Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher agreeing to let the KGB, the Soviet Union's spy agency, build telecommunications networks during the Cold War.

"Do you want it to be provided by suppliers that are beholden to regime-centric governments that are accountable to no one? Or do you want them to spring from citizen-centric societies that actually obey the rule of law?" he said. "That's really the proposition before us."

Pottinger left journalism in 2005 to join the U.S. Marine Corps, where he served in Iraq and Afghanistan as an intelligence officer. In his [essay for the Journal](#), he said he

was inspired to make the career change after viewing an “obscene” video of an American being beheaded by a terrorist in Iraq.

At 31, Pottinger was older than a typical officer candidate — and out of shape. He trained, friends said, by running along the Great Wall outside Beijing. At officer candidates school in Quantico, VA, the drill instructor learned of Pottinger’s background in China and challenged him to sing the first verse of the Marines’ Hymn in Mandarin, which he did loudly, if not gracefully.

It was in Afghanistan that Pottinger caught the attention of Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, who was overseeing intelligence, and the two men collaborated on [an influential report](#) in 2010 that was highly critical of the military’s intelligence-gathering methods.

Flynn became a prominent Trump surrogate in 2016 and, after the election, was named his first national security adviser. He recruited Pottinger, then working at a New York hedge fund, to join the transition team at Trump Tower.

Navigating power centers

President Trump, Pottinger and then-White House Chief of Staff John F. Kelly meet veterans on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders' summit in the central Vietnamese city of Danang on Nov. 10, 2017. (AFP/Getty Images)

On China, Trump has vacillated between the moderate views of his economic advisers, including senior adviser Jared Kushner, National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who favor cooperation on trade, and the hard-liners such as Stephen K. Bannon, who left in summer 2017, and trade adviser Peter Navarro, who have pushed toward a decoupling of the world’s two largest economies.

The moderates are sometimes referred to as “KKM,” a powerful bloc that generally resists the more aggressive instincts of Pottinger and the superhawk Navarro.

Pottinger falls on the scale closer to the hard-liners, but he is less ideological and has maintained a military-style respect for the chain of command, content to stay out of the spotlight and careful not to upstage the bigger personalities in the West Wing, associates said.

Those traits have helped him outlast three national security advisers and rise, last summer, to the deputy position under the fourth, Robert C. O’Brien.

“Matt has an extraordinary sense of caution that, ‘Let’s not push something unless the president clearly has approved it.’ This is different from other members of White House staff,” said Michael Pillsbury, a Hudson Institute analyst on China who was on the transition team. “Matt has also fashioned alliances and worked closely with different ideological camps.”

Unlike some Trump aides, Pottinger has a good working relationship with key Democrats, but some have criticized the administration’s lurch toward a combative posture with Beijing without hewing to a broader strategic plan.

“The problem is the distance between the strategy as [Pottinger] would conceive of it and what is actually coming out as U.S. policy,” said Ely Ratner, who is executive vice president at the Center for a New American Security and worked as an high-ranking adviser to [Joe Biden](#) when Biden was vice president. “Acting in a confrontational, unilateral way is not going to be effective unless you’re coordinating with your allies, and making the necessary investments in the United States to maintain American competitiveness and put forward an alternative to China. And they’re not doing those things.”

As Asia director, Pottinger kept in his office a large whiteboard mapped out with a highly detailed accounting of China’s growing global influence. The diagram was labeled with military-style buzzwords such as “Lines of Effort” and “Strategic Goals,” according to people who saw it.

A former NSC colleague called it a scorecard of all the ways “the Chinese Communist Party was attacking the West — and how we could fight back.”

Yet Trump has complicated the efforts with his inconsistent messages on Beijing and his regular praise of Xi. Pottinger met with the [families of Chinese dissidents](#) at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, but Trump has said little about the mass [pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong](#) and China’s jailing of more than a million Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang.

While Trump has cited the move to ban flights for Chinese nationals on Jan. 31 as prescient, experts said the ban was inadequate because the disease was already spreading in the United States and it did not apply to American citizens. Trump continued playing down the dangers for six more weeks, [squandering precious time](#) to prepare, even as Pottinger moved to [secure face masks for the NSC staff](#) and relocated from the West Wing to the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, distancing himself from O’Brien, in a bid to ensure continuity of service in case either became infected.

[As U.S. discouraged mask use for public, White House team raced to secure face coverings from Taiwan for senior staff](#)

Associates said he recognizes the limits of his influence on Trump.

“Matt looks at it not that he is leading the president, but he’ll be ready when [Trump] gets to a place” to make a decision, said Tim Morrison, a former NSC official who worked with Pottinger. “He’s not trying to outmaneuver various wings of the White House. That’s not how a Marine operates. He follows orders. He makes sure that if a commander says take a hill, he’s ready to take a hill.”

In mid-March, under mounting public criticism, Trump made a sharp turn from praising Xi to blaming China for its lack of transparency, citing a Chinese official who promoted a conspiracy theory that the virus had been released by the U.S. military. He backed off such confrontational rhetoric after speaking to Xi later in the month. But analysts said that the crisis has accelerated and sharpened a geopolitical contest that will play out over years.

During the India forum in January, Pottinger was asked whether the administration aimed to “decouple” economically from Beijing in a Cold War-style standoff.

“Decoupling,” he replied, “is when you have a Great Firewall where not a single Western Internet company has been able to prosper or survive in China, by design. When Christian churches are torn down and ethnic minorities are put into reeducation camps, that’s ‘decoupling.’ So the ‘decoupling’ is something that’s been underway for quite a long time — and it is not driven by the United States.”

Alice Crites and John Hudson contributed to this report.

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiries - Visas
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 12:12:14 PM

Hi Jonathan, VOA PR referred these inquiries to USAGM OPA.

thx, (b) (6)

[THE HILL]

From: Rafael Bernal (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 10:56:51 AM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Report on NPR

Hi (b) (6),

Hope all is well with you.

I'm writing up the NPR report on the foreign journalist visas at VoA.

Can you confirm its accuracy?

Thanks,

Rafael Bernal
Staff Writer

[The Hill](#)

O: (b) (6)
C: (b) (6)
(b) (6)

[NYT Follow up]

From: Pranshu Verma (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 11:19 AM
To: Public Relations (b) (6)
Subject: NYT: Confirming information re: J1 visa extensions

Hello,

I'm Pranshu, a reporter at the NYT. Could you confirm Mr. Pack will likely not extend the J-1

VISAs for foreign journalists who work for Voice of America in the US? Do you have a sense of how many journalists in the organization are on the J-1 Visa at the moment?

We intend to publish a story momentarily.

Pranshu

Pranshu Verma | Reporter

Washington Bureau | The New York Times

Mobile/Signal/WhatsApp: (b) (6)

(b) (6)

[NBC News Follow up]

From: DeLuce, Daniel (NBCUniversal) (b) (6)

Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 11:29:49 AM

To: Public Affairs (b) (6)

Subject: Query on J1 visas -- from NBC News

To the public affairs team at USAGM,

I am writing for a second time to ask for your assistance on the status of J1 visas for foreign nationals working as journalists for VOA's language services.

I understand that the new CEO, Michael Pack, has decided not to extend J1 visas for foreign nationals working on the editorial staff of VOA's language services.

What is the rationale for the decision ? How many employees or contractors will be affected ?

Is the decision final or still under review?

Thank you.

Best,

Dan De Luce

NBC News

(b) (6)

[NYT]

From: Pranshu Verma (b) (6)

Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 11:19 AM

To: Public Relations (b) (6)

Subject: NYT: Confirming information re: J1 visa extensions

Hello,

I'm Pranshu, a reporter at the NYT. Could you confirm Mr. Pack will likely not extend the J-1 VISAs for foreign journalists who work for Voice of America in the US? Do you have a sense of how many journalists in the organization are on the J-1 Visa at the moment?

We intend to publish a story momentarily.

Pranshu

Pranshu Verma | Reporter

Washington Bureau | The New York Times

Mobile/Signal/WhatsApp: (b) (6)

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
To: (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: FBI, NBC News and Wa o - Visas
Date: July 9, 2020 9:58:17 AM

Hi Jonathan, forwarding two media inquiries.
thv (b) (6)

From: DeLuce, Daniel (NBCUniversal) (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 7:31 AM
To: Public Relations (b) (6)
Subject: Query on visas from NBC News (b) (6)

To (b) (6) and the public affairs team,

I would like to ask for comment or guidance on the status of J1 visas for foreign nationals working at VOA's language services.

I understand USAGM will not approve the extension of J1 visas for staff at VOA. If that is the case, what is the rationale for the decision and how many employees will this affect?

Thank you.

Best,
Dan De Luce
NBC News
(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 9:40:35 AM
To: Farhi, Paul (b) (6) Public Affairs (b) (6)
Cc: Public Relations (b) (6)
Subject: RE: WashPost question for you

Paul,

We are sending you over to USAGM Public Affairs for a response to your request for information on visas in the agency.

Thank you for contacting us. Never hesitate to be in touch with VOA PR.

Best,

(b) (6)

(b) (6) Director (Outreach and Engagement)
VOA Public Relations
330 Independence Ave., SW
Washington DC 20237
Direct: (b) (6)
Main: (b) (6)
(b) (6)

[@msnbc.com](https://nam01.safelinks.office.com?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.msnbc.com%2F&data=02%7C01%7Cpublicaffairs%40usagm.gov%7C77449632fa04c254dc703a8240a59e477C6b09a87c673541c2b1c1354eccc2a8659%7C01%7C63729898372277691&data=6fYQ1bvRscdReomPSKUqvoA8uD4qpbpJOErfBhizA%3D&reserved=0)

-----Original Message-----

From: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 9:59 AM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Re: WashPost question for you

Thanks.

> On Jul 9, 2020, at 8:15 AM, (b) (6) wrote:

>

> Hi Paul,

>

> I wanted you to know that we'll be working on getting you an answer this morning.

>

> Best,

>

> Jim

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Farhi, Paul (b) (6)

> Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 9:50 PM

> To: (b) (6)

> Cc: (b) (6)

>

> Subject: Re: WashPost question for you

>

> Thanks, Jim. Tomorrow morning would be great.

>

>> On Jul 8, 2020, at 8:23 PM, (b) (6) wrote:

>>

>> CAUTION: EXTERNAL SENDER

>>

>> Hi Paul,

>>

>> I will look into this and see if I can get you an answer. Can you tell me what your deadline is on this?

>>

>> Best,

>>

>>

>>

>> Sent from my iPhone

>>

>>>> On Jul 8, 2020, at 7:54 PM, Farhi, Paul (b) (6) wrote:

>>>

>>>

>>> Hello (b) (6) ... I'm hearing that there have been some personnel cuts at VOA's language services due to the expiration of various visas and a decision not to extend them by USAGM. Can you tell me anything about this?

>>>

>>> Thank you for your help...Paul

>>>

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>>>

>>> Paul Farhi

>>> Washington Post

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiries: Arab News and VOA
Date: Sunday, July 12, 2020 8:14:19 AM

From: Zaira Lakhpatwala (b) (6)

Sent: Saturday, July 11, 2020 4:50:03 PM

To: Public Affairs (b) (6)

Subject: Re: VOA

Hi there,

I'm writing to you from Arab News, the leading English-language daily in Saudi Arabia, catering to the Middle East.

I would like to speak to a VOA spokesperson regarding the decision to not grant visas to foreign journalists in the US. I was wondering if you have a comment already or if you'd be open to an interview.

Look forward to hearing from you.

--

Regards,
Zaira Lakhpatwala
Media Editor
Mobile: (b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Date: July 11, 2020 at 2:05:15 PM EDT
To: (b) (6) Public Relations
(b) (6)
(b) (6) USAGM Public Affairs Staff <(b) (6)>
Subject: Re: Media query: J-1 visas

Hi (b) (6),

VOA PR has been asked by USAGM PA to send all media queries related to this matter to the so they can address. I have copied them on this email so you can contact them directly for a response.

Thanks much.

(b) (6)

Director of Public Relations
Voice of America
US Agency for Global Media

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Saturday, July 11, 2020 2:03:04 PM

To: Public Relations (b) (6)

Subject: Media query: J-1 visas

Hello

I am working on a report this afternoon about the visa renewal process at VOA.

Please could you provide clarification on the number of J-1 holders at VOA whose visas have expired or are due to expire in the next 60 days.

Kind regards

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Press Freedom Editor
Voice of America

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry from Breitbart: RE. the OPM report on security failures.
Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 4:57:25 PM

From: Neil Munro (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 4:27 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: RE. the OPM report on security failures.

Thanks for the OPM report on security failures. Two questions:

What visas does USAGM use to bring in foreign workers? L1s? J-1s? H-1Bs? F1-OPTs?

Does US-AGM sponsor its employees for green cards?

Does US-AGM use outside contractors to help import foreign employees? If so, which companies?

Yours,

Neil Munro
Breitbart News

From: (b) (6)
To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry from CQ Roll Call: Request for comment on Sept.24 HFAC hearing
Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 3:50:05 PM

From: Rachel Oswald (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 2:43 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Request for comment on Sept.24 HFAC hearing

Hello,

I've got a story **publishing tomorrow morning** on last week's House Foreign Affairs hearing on USAGM. As I'm sure you're aware, Mr. Pack was strongly criticized by Democrats and Republicans at the hearing for his management of the agency. Does Mr. Pack have a response to lawmaker's concerns?

Lawmakers seemed to be particularly upset about his "impoundment" of funds meant for OTF and how he has allegedly placed journalists' lives and safety at risk by refusing to renew some VOA journalists' work visas and insinuating in interviews that VOA would be a great place to insert a foreign spy.

Thanks much,

Rachel Oswald

Foreign policy reporter | CQ Roll Call

(b) (6)
(b) (6)

[rollcall.com](#) | [info.cq.com](#) | [fiscalnote.com](#)

(b)
(b)

(b) (6)
September 3, 2020 2:34 PM
(b) (6) (b) (6)
Inquiry from Kyodo News

My name is Atsushi Takemoto and I am a correspondent with Kyodo News (Japan) Washington Bureau. I have read the letter written by a number of VOA journalists which expresses concerns with the Chief Executive Officer Mr. Pack. And I wonder if I can get a comment or statement regarding the complaint raised by VOA employees. Also please let me ask if you could confirm several journalists were forced back to home countries with their visas cancelled.

Atsushi TAKEMOTO/竹本 篤史
Kyodo News Washington Bureau
共同通信ワシントン支局
Cell (b) (6)
Off ce (b) (6)
Fax (b) (6)
Email (b) (6)

HP [\[15767\]](#)
 |m p %3 9/2F9/2F g| y %2FA p =0267C0147Cp 1 ff % 0 g p %7C252 /15031 3 723 20 08 85038256697C 99 87 6735 1 2 1 135 3 865967C0047C1467C6373 75 9371152850A p =2Xy5W11 5462B 12E1SHQ 894F 0 K BE3T 26281 NL %3DA p =0

From: (b) (6)
To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry from Law 360: Comment on allegations against Pack, USAGM
Date: Wednesday, October 14, 2020 5:06:57 PM
Attachments: [wb-ig.OSC Complaint9.29.20 \(1\) \(1\).pdf](#)

From: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2020 5:04 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: Comment on allegations against Pack, USAGM

From: Anne Cullen (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2020 4:43 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Comment on allegations against Pack, USAGM

Hi there,

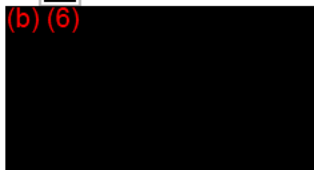
I'm reaching out to see if the USAGM has any response to the allegations laid out in the attached whistleblower complaint. My deadline is around 7 pm EST.

Best,
Anne

--

Anne Cullen
Senior Reporter, Employment


(b) (6)



From: (b) (6)
To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry from POLITICO: Time-sensitive request for comment - My deadline is ASAP.
Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:40:50 PM
Attachments: [WB IG.OSC Complaint9.29.20.pdf](#)

From: Daniel Lippman (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:14 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Time-sensitive request for comment

Hi,

Do you have a comment on this whistleblower complaint? My deadline is ASAP. My cell is (b) (6) (b) (6).

Many thanks,
Daniel

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry from Telemundo (Contractor-NBCUniversal) - Visas
Date: Monday, August 3, 2020 8:07:03 AM

From: Pena, Maria (Contractor-NBCUniversal) (b) (6)

Sent: Sunday, August 2, 2020 10:13 PM

To: Public Affairs (b) (6)

Subject: Help with a story, please

Hello,

I'm working on a story about the situation of 76 foreign journalists who are not getting their visas renewed at the end of th August and/or would face the possibility of being sent back to their home countries.

I know from media reports that U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) CEO Michael Pack hasn't really explained the reasons for letting their visas expired.

Considering the "America First" approach pursued by the Trump Administration, would you tell me if there are plans to replace these journalists with US-based Hispanic journalists -permanent residents or citizens-, or American journalists who are proficient in the languages covered by VOA?

I'm just trying to understand what are the next steps if the current journalists don't have their visas.

I know from speaking with some of them, they are already making plans to go back to their home countries, but would rather stay in the US if their visas are eventually renewed.

I look forward to hearing back from you about these questions.

Thanks so much for your help.

Regards,

María Peña
Digital Reporter
Telemundo

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
To: Diane Cullo
Cc: Jonathan Bronitsky; Madeleine Hubbard; (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry from The Real News Network (TRNN) : USAGM / VOA Firewall Questions
Date: Monday, November 9, 2020 2:05:22 PM

From: Aman Azhar (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, November 9, 2020 2:00 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6) (b) (6)
(b) (6); Michael Pack (b) (6)
Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: Inquiry: USAGM / VOA Firewall Questions

Dear USAGM/VOA Colleagues:

Hope you're staying well. This email is a follow up on my previous note seeking clarity on issues such as firewall. Since I have not heard back, I thought it best to write again and request your input. Also, now that election has produced a projected winner I'm also including a question about that below. This piece goes out midweek and I'd appreciate your input on the questions below:

1. The Final Rule document asserts Firewall regulation was promulgated by the former BBG on June 4 and came into effect on June 15, 2020. Can you clarify if it means that the Firewall Regulation did not exist before that and, if not, then what was the prior administrative arrangement?
2. Is it correct to assume Mr. Pack inherited the powers as CEO that were consolidated under his predecessor's tenure?
3. With Joe Biden as the projected winner, would CEO Pack reconsider his policies including on J-1 visas and appointing a full time VOA director?

Thanks again and looking forward to your guidance at earliest convenience.

- Aman

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Aman Azhar (b) (6)
Date: Thu, Oct 29, 2020 at 11:43 AM
Subject: Inquiry: USAGM / VOA Firewall Questions
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6) USAGM Public Affairs Staff <(b) (6)>
(b) (6)
Public Affairs (b) (6)

Dear USAGM/VOA Colleagues:

I hope this finds you well! The recent decision by CEO Michael Pack to strike down the firewall has reignited public interest in better understanding the situation, over and above the partisan interest. I'm listing a few questions for your clarification and would much appreciate it if you could provide your responses at earliest convenience. Please feel free to reach me on my digits (202-812-1477) if that works better. Questions follow:

1. The Final Rule document, Page 01, asserts Firewall regulation was promulgated by the then-BBG on June 4 and came into effect on June 15, 2020. Does that mean that the Firewall Regulation did not exist before that and for how long?
2. Would it be correct to assume that prior to June 15, USAGM CEO was empowered to administer/direct editorial management across all five networks including VOA? Did the previous CEO Lansing enjoy the same authority with BBG present at that time?
3. Why did the then-BBG find it appropriate to (re)enact Firewall Regulations in its final hours as the Final Rule document asserts? Can you provide the reasons behind this action?
4. Lastly, now that the Firewall regulation stands repealed, does Mr. Pack enjoy the same measure of authority that the previous CEO John Lansing had or is there any significant difference between the former and present powers of the CEO?

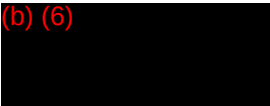
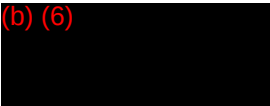
I'd much appreciate it if your good offices could help me straighten this wrinkle out, which I feel is a critical part of understanding the USAGM/VOA present situation. If anyone from the Public Affairs or the legal team can speak with me off-the-record to explain this better than I'm happy to do so. I'll be grateful for your earliest input!

Very best,

Aman Azhar
Correspondent
The Real News Network

--

=====

Aman Azhar
Climate Change Correspondent
The Real News Network (TRNN)
Pronouns: He/Him
M: (b) (6)
T: 
W: 

The future depends on knowing. Donate today at therealnews.com/donate

=====

From: (b) (6)
To: Jonathan Bronitsky
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry from VOA News: Request for comment
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 10:21:56 AM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 10:17 AM
To: USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6)
Subject: Media query: Request for comment

Dear USAGM,

I am reporting on a Sept. 14 letter that members of the Senate and House sent to USAGM CEO Michael Pack and would like to request comment. My deadline is 4PM today (Sept. 15).

A link to the letter is here: <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/09-14-20%20Letter%20to%20Pack%20on%20Visa%20ExtensionsFINAL1.pdf>

Please could you provide comment on the letter, including whether Mr. Pack intends to respond to the questions laid out in it.

Could you also provide comment and updates on the following:

The status of the J-1 visa review, including when it will be completed and whether its findings will be made public.

Claims that termination letters sent to VOA J-1 journalists included administrative errors and in at least one case that a letter was sent, apparently in error, to a journalist whose visa does not expire until Oct.

Whether USAGM has completed reviews of journalists already forced to return because their J-1 visas expired, and if so, what the review's findings are.

Comment on claims that the visa review has endangered journalists by forcing them to return to countries where they could face retaliation because of their reporting for VOA, or expose them to health risks by having to travel during the pandemic.

Comment on the reasons for delays in renewing contracts in language services, including the Latin America division that led to at least 10 journalists being forced to stop work and the division having to change its programming and schedules.

Comment on claims that the non-renewal of J-1 visas and delays in contracts are impacting VOA's ability to report.

Comment on a letter signed by current and former staff warning that comments and actions by Mr. Pack--including remarks during an interview with the Federalist in which Mr. Pack

said the agencies would be a great place to put a spy--endanger the work of USAGM journalists.

Please provide comment by my deadline at 4PM today (Sept. 15).

Kind regards,

(b) (6)

Press Freedom Editor
Voice Of America
A Free Press Matters

Phone: (b) (6)

Twitter

Signal:

From: (b) (6)
To: Diane Cullo
Cc: Jonathan Bronitsky; Toni DeLancey; (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry from VOA News: Request for comment
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 2:20:32 PM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 2:16 PM
To: USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Media query: Request for comment

Dear USAGM,

Just following up on my email from earlier today, requesting comment from USAGM on a Sept. 14 letter that members of Congress sent to USAGM CEO Michael Pack.

My deadline is 4PM today (Sept. 15). Hope that you will be able to provide comment on the items listed in my earlier email.

Kind regards,

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 10:17 AM
To: USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6)
Subject: Media query: Request for comment

Dear USAGM,

I am reporting on a Sept. 14 letter that members of the Senate and House sent to USAGM CEO Michael Pack and would like to request comment. My deadline is 4PM today (Sept. 15).

A link to the letter is here: <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/09-14-20%20Letter%20to%20Pack%20on%20Visa%20ExtensionsFINAL1.pdf>

Please could you provide comment on the letter, including whether Mr. Pack intends to respond to the questions laid out in it.

Could you also provide comment and updates on the following:

The status of the J-1 visa review, including when it will be completed and whether its findings will be made public.

Claims that termination letters sent to VOA J-1 journalists included administrative errors and in at least one case that a letter was sent, apparently in error, to a journalist whose visa does not expire until Oct.

Whether USAGM has completed reviews of journalists already forced to return because their J-1 visas expired, and if so, what the review's findings are.

Comment on claims that the visa review has endangered journalists by forcing them to return to countries where they could face retaliation because of their reporting for VOA, or expose them to health risks by having to travel during the pandemic.

Comment on the reasons for delays in renewing contracts in language services, including the Latin America division that led to at least 10 journalists being forced to stop work and the division having to change its programming and schedules.

Comment on claims that the non-renewal of J-1 visas and delays in contracts are impacting VOA's ability to report.

Comment on a letter signed by current and former staff warning that comments and actions by Mr. Pack--including remarks during an interview with the Federalist in which Mr. Pack said the agencies would be a great place to put a spy--endanger the work of USAGM journalists.

Please provide comment by my deadline at 4PM today (Sept. 15).

Kind regards,

(b) (6)

Press Freedom Editor
Voice Of America
A Free Press Matters

Phone: (b) (6)
Twitter:
Signal:

From: [Daniel Robinson](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Media Inquiry
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2020 8:41:21 PM

This is a media inquiry seeking USAGM comment.

One week after a group of 14 Voice of America employees publicly challenged the new CEO, it's unclear whether key figures involved in organizing and promoting the unprecedented protest will face any disciplinary action.

Documents and social media posts obtained by USAGM Watch show that VOA's two White House correspondents have been key leaders of the protest, with one the apparent leader of steps to add signatures to the original protest letter.

One of them has used her Facebook page to campaign for J-1 visa holders forced to leave the U.S. The other has used his Facebook page, which he uses to promote his coverage for VOA, to support outside critics of Michael Pack who compared the CEO's actions to McCarthyism.

Questions:

Is USAGM aware of the above?

Is USAGM actively investigating, or has it investigated, the origins of the protest letter sent to the CEO?

Will the organizers of the protest, including the drafters and signatories of the letter, face any disciplinary action?

It appears, based on initial checks by USAGM Watch, that Steve Herman may once again be blocking citizen journalists -- editors and contributors to USAGM Watch -- from viewing his Facebook page ["w7voa"]. As reported by USAGM Watch in the past, Herman was previously ordered by USAGM/VOA officials to remove an earlier block that prevented us from viewing his content. Is USAGM aware of this?

Thank you for your time.

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: Fw: J1 VISA extension: NYT - We are publishing a story momentarily.
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 10:54:30 AM
Importance: High

From: Pranshu Verma (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 10:51:30 AM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: J1 VISA extension: NYT

Hello,

Can you confirm that Mr. Pack will not extend the J1 visas for foreign journalists that are employed by Voice of America? Will this affect somewhere around 100 journalists? Is there any comment USAGM wishes to provide?

We are publishing a story momentarily.

Pranshu

Pranshu Verma | Reporter
Washington Bureau | The New York Times
Mobile/Signal/WhatsApp: (b) (6)
(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: Phnom Penh Post in Cambodia - Visas
Date: Monday, August 24, 2020 6:46:52 AM

From: Sovi Khorn (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 2:00 AM
To: USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6)
Subject: Press inquiry

Dear Madam/Sir

I am Khorn Savi, reporter from Phnom Penh Post in Cambodia.
Hope you would mind with this email.

AP has reported that some VOA foreign staff will be forced to leave the US when their Visa expires.

Are there any Khmer staff?

What can you do if Cambodian staffs are forced to leave?

Best regard,

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: BBC request - J-1 visa issue
Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:40:35 PM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:37 PM
To: George Wright - World Online (b) (6); Public Relations
(b) (6); USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6);
(b) (6)
Subject: Re: BBC request - J-1 visa issue

Hello,

Thanks for your email. We are sharing your request with our parent agency USAGM's public affairs office as they are handling queries on this issue.

Regards, (b) (6)

(b) (6)
Director of Public Relations
Voice of America
US Agency for Global Media

From: George Wright - World Online (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:33:55 PM
To: Public Relations (b) (6)
Subject: BBC request

Hello,

I'm a journalist from BBC News in London, hope you're all well. I was hoping you might be able to answer a question for me.

Could please you tell me which nationalities are represented highest in the 76 employees on J-1 visas at VOA?

All the best,

George

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: CNN Inquiry: Visas
Date: Friday, July 10, 2020 9:31:56 AM

From: Hansler, Jennifer (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 9:30:06 AM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: CNN Inquiry: Visas

Good morning,

Can you confirm that USAGM will not renew visas for its foreign journalists? Why was this decision made? How many people will be affected?

Thank you.

Best,
Jennifer

Jennifer Hansler
CNN State Department producer
Cell/Signal/WhatsApp: + (b) (6)
Sent from mobile, please excuse typos

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: Eliot Engel on VOA visas
Date: Friday, August 21, 2020 3:21:57 PM

Hello Jonathan, forwarding this media inquiry.

thanks,

(b) (6)

USAGM Public Affairs

From: Rafael Bernal (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, August 21, 2020 3:19 PM
To: (b) (6) USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6) (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Subject: Eliot Engel on VOA visas

Hello (b) (6),

House Foreign Affairs Chairman Eliot Engel today warned that "any harm that comes to [VoA visa holders] will be a direct result of Michael Pack's inaction."

Does USAGM have a response? And does Mr. Pack plan to keep his Sept. 24 appointment to testify before the committee?

Best,

Rafael Bernal
Staff Writer

[The Hill](#)

O: (b) (6)

C:

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: FOLLOW UP: CNN Request for comment
Date: Friday, July 10, 2020 3:07:30 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)

Hello Jonathan, forwarding this inquiry (along with info from VOA PR).

thx, (b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 3:01 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: RE: FOLLOW UP: CNN Request for comment

(b) (6) said that you/Jonathan can get the number from Marie directly. Thanks, (b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 2:54 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: RE: FOLLOW UP: CNN Request for comment

OK thanks. Good to know. I assume you/she/he can get the number from (b) (6) and/or Marie, as I presume CNN wants the number of non-US citizens working for VOA in DC and they could be FTEs, PSCs or another status.

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 2:52 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Re: FOLLOW UP: CNN Request for comment

Adding (b) (6),
She's been sending these to Jonathan.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 2:48:50 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: FOLLOW UP: CNN Request for comment

Did you pass this one along to Jonathan? Just want to make sure you/he sees it as I know it's Friday afternoon...

From: Atwood, Kylie (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 2:40 PM
To: (b) (6) Public Relations (b) (6)
Cc: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Re: CNN Request for comment

Hi – any response? I do see there is a comment out there about a case by case review, is that true?
How many foreign journalists work for VOA in DC?

Kylie Atwood
CNN National Security Correspondent
Cell: (b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Date: Friday, July 10, 2020 at 1:01 PM
To: "Atwood, Kylie" (b) (6), Public Relations
(b) (6)
Cc: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: RE: CNN Request for comment

Hello,

Thanks for your email. We have copied our colleagues at USAGM Public Affairs as this is a question for that office to answer.

Thanks again.

(b) (6)

(b) (6)
Director of Public Relations
Voice of America
U.S. Agency for Global Media
(formerly Broadcasting Board of Governors)
330 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20237

(b) (6) Direct
(b) (6) Main

www.insidevoa.com

@insidevoa



From: Atwood, Kylie (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 1:00 PM
To: Public Relations (b) (6)
Subject: CNN Request for comment

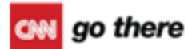
Hi – We are told that the U.S. Agency for Global Media leadership indicated that international journalists who work for Voice of America (VOA) will not have their visas extended and that Bay Fang was fired this week.

Any comment on either of these things?

Is there a separate spokesperson at U.S. Agency for Global Media I need to pose these questions to as well?

Thanks!

Kylie Atwood
CNN National Security Correspondent
Cell, Signal, WhatsApp: (b) (6)
Office: (b) (6)
Email: (b) (6)



From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: Fw: Visas // ABC News request
Date: Friday, July 10, 2020 9:02:55 AM

From: Finnegan, Conor J. (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 10:33 PM
To: Public Affairs
Subject: Visas // ABC News request

Hi all,
Can you please share with ABC News the statement shared with other outlets about a “comprehensive, case-by-case assessment of personal services contractors”? Does this apply to all branches within USAGM, or does it exclude grantees?
Thank you-
Conor

Conor Finnegan | ABC News State Dept Reporter-Producer (b) (6) | Sent from my iPhone

From: (b) (6)
To: Diane Cullo
Cc: Jonathan Bronitsky; Toni DeLancey; (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: HFAC Hearing — Jewish Insider Request for Comment
Date: Thursday, September 24, 2020 4:18:47 PM

From: Marc Rod (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2020 3:56 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: HFAC Hearing — Jewish Insider Request for Comment

To whom it may concern,

I'm a reporter for Jewish Insider, a publication covering U.S. politics and business news, and I'm working on a story about today's House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on USAGM, and I wanted to give Mr. Pack and/or the agency the opportunity to respond to the specific issues and accusations raised during today's hearing. My questions are as follows:

- Why did Mr. Pack not comply with the committee's subpoena to appear at today's hearing?
- Rep. Engel accused Mr. Pack of deliberately scheduling administrative hearings today to manufacture a conflict with today's hearing. How does Mr. Pack respond?
- Rep. Engel claimed that the other dates USAGM provided for which Mr. Pack is available to testify are while Congress is not in session. Does the agency dispute this? What dates were proposed?
- Rep. McCaul criticized Mr. Pack as having "undermined [USAGM] from the top" and of failing to meaningfully engage with Congress to answer basic questions. How does Mr. Pack respond?
- Grant Turner accused Mr. Pack of "gross mismanagement" and "abuse of authority," as well as "financial mismanagement" which left some networks and offices at risk of being unable to meet payroll. He further claimed that USAGM leadership refused to approve a cleaning contract or a toilet paper purchase for certain offices. Does the agency dispute this?
- Karen Kornbluh said that the Open Technology Fund's work has been "crippled" by Mr. Pack's actions. How does Mr. Pack respond?
- Ambassador Ryan Crocker said that Mr. Pack's actions have placed USAGM's reputation and work in jeopardy. How does Mr. Pack respond?
- Several members of congress and witnesses claimed that USAGM's decision not to renew J1 visas for some foreign journalists could endanger said journalists' safety and lives. How does Mr. Pack respond?
- Rep. Connolly accused Mr. Pack of "handing a gift" to several of the U.S.'s foreign adversaries through his actions at USAGM. How does Mr. Pack respond?
- Several members of Congress and witnesses said that Mr. Pack's speculation about potential foreign spies within the agency undermines USAGM's work, discredits its journalists, and physically endangers those working abroad. How does Mr. Pack respond? Does he have evidence that there are foreign spies working within USAGM?
- Rep. Castro said the aforementioned claims about spies were "libelous." Does Mr. Pack wish to respond?

- Rep. Malinowski characterized Mr. Pack's comments about spies as "paranoia" and claimed that Mr. Pack has done more damage to America's interests than spies could have. How does Mr. Pack respond?
- Grant Turner claimed that, rather than boosting morale, Mr. Pack's actions have had a "chilling" effect and "intimidated" USAGM journalists. How does Mr. Pack respond?
- Do Mr. Pack and/or USAGM have any other statement or comment they'd like to offer on today's HFAC hearing or the subpoena HFAC issued for Mr. Pack?

My deadline is 6:00 p.m. Thank you.

Best,

Marc Rod

Reporter, Jewish Insider

(b) (6)

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the bottom portion of the letter, obscuring the signature and any other text that might have been present.

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); [Kellie Boyle](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: Inquiry on foreign VOA journalists
Date: Saturday, January 16, 2021 4:30:37 PM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Saturday, January 16, 2021 2:09 PM
To: Colm Quinn (b) (6); Public Relations
(b) (6); Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Inquiry on foreign VOA journalists

Hello,

Thanks for your email. We are copying the USAGM Public Affairs team as your query is within their purview.

Regards, (b) (6)

(b) (6)
Director of Public Relations
Voice of America
US Agency for Global Media

From: Colm Quinn (b) (6)
Sent: Saturday, January 16, 2021 2:07:25 PM
To: Public Relations (b) (6)
Subject: Inquiry on foreign VOA journalists

Hi there,

I'm writing a story today on the upcoming departure of dozens of foreign VOA journalists because their visas were not extended. Do you happen to have an exact number on the amount of journalists who have had to leave over the past 12 months (including this Tuesday)?

Thanks,
Colm

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: NK News/Wash Correspondent - Fw: Request for Comment re: Visas
Date: Monday, July 13, 2020 4:17:01 PM

From: Terrence Matsuo (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 4:14:10 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Request for Comment

To whom it may concern:

My name is Terrence Matsuo, and I am the Washington correspondent for NK News. I am working on a story about the administration's policies regarding visas for journalists at VOA and RFA.

The story was first reported by NPR here: <https://www.npr.org/2020/07/09/889301025/u-s-broadcasting-agency-will-not-extend-visas-for-its-foreign-journalists>

Can you confirm if this report is accurate? If it is not, which aspects of the story are inaccurate?

--

Best,

Terrence Matsuo
Washington Correspondent
[NK News](#) – News and opinion
[Korea Risk Group](#) – Institutional services
[NK Pro](#) – Research tools, data and premium analysis
(b) (6)
m USA + (b) (6)



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From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: Query on visas -- from NBC News
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 8:14:14 AM

From: DeLuce, Daniel (NBCUniversal) (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 9:10:49 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Query on visas -- from NBC News

To the public affairs team at USAGM,

I would like to ask for your assistance.

I understand that J1 visas for foreign nationals working in VOA's various language services will not be extended.

I would like to ask what is the rationale for this decision and how many employees will be affected.

Thank you.

Best,
Dan De Luce
NBC News

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: Request an interview with Mr. Michael Pack
Date: Thursday, September 17, 2020 9:26:21 AM

From: Didi Prambadi (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 8:01 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Request an interview with Mr. Michael Pack

Philadelphia September 16, 2020

Dear Mr. Michael Pack
Chief Executive Officer USAGM

The AP news agency and other mass media reported that VOA would dismiss as many as 60 of its journalists from various languages. Since last August, 16 foreign journalists have been repatriated to his country. And this step will continue in the near future.

Questions:

- What's the main reason for reducing those journalists? Is there any indication that they acted as spies or were dangerous? Which countries are they repatriated?
- How many journalists from Indonesia work at VOA Bahasa Indonesia? So how many will be repatriated to Indonesia or not renewed their residence permits and visas?
- Would you tell us who is going to be repatriated? What are the main reasons for choosing them, and is the Head of VOA Bahasa Indonesia included on the list?
- Did you hear about any attempts by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia to protest or question the fate of its journalists working at VOA?
- What did VOA do against the protests of a number of senior VOA journalists who denounced your actions freezing the visas of foreign journalists?
- What would you tell all Indonesian journalists and the Indonesian people about this?

And for the last question is it possible we can do a special interview with you via Zoom?

Thank you for your attention.

Didi Prambadi
Chief Operating Officer

(b) (6)
phone: (b) (6)
email: (b) (6)

private: (b) (6)

Indonesian Lantern Magazine is more than just a magazine.

Each issue of Indonesian Lantern raises its unique and meaningful voice to provide a reference point to Indonesian community navigating the often rough terrain of life in America. It also celebrates our rich culture and heritage.

The people behind The Indonesian Lantern have been community advocates and journalists that have shown their love and dedication for their home and adopted countries, Indonesia and America.

Indonesian Lantern vision is to be the trusted resource for Indonesian culture, history, and business. Most of all, It is the place where the Indonesian community can have a voice in mainstream America and finally be recognized.

From: (b) (6)
To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: Request an interview with Mr. Michael Pack
Date: Friday, September 18, 2020 12:10:52 PM

Hello Diane, this person is re-sending his/her media request.

thanks,

(b) (6)

USAGM Public Affairs

From: Didi Prambadi (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 7:56 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Request an interview with Mr. Michael Pack

Philadelphia September 16, 2020

Dear Mr. Michael Pack
Chief Executive Officer USAGM

The AP news agency and other mass media reported that VOA would dismiss as many as 60 of its journalists from various languages. Since last August, 16 foreign journalists have been repatriated to his country. And this step will continue in the near future.

Questions:

- What's the main reason for reducing the those journalists? Is there any indication that they acted as spies or were dangerous? Which countries are they repatriated?
- How many journalists from Indonesia work at VOA Bahasa Indonesia? So how many will be repatriated to Indonesia or not renewed their residence permits and visas?
- Would you tell us who are going to be repatriated? What are the main reasons for choosing them, and is the Head of VOA Bahasa Indonesia included on the list?
- Did you heard about any attempts by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia to protest or question the fate of its journalists working at VOA?
- What did VOA do against the protests of a number of senior VOA journalists who denounced your actions freezing the visas of foreign journalists?
- What would you tell to all Indonesian journalists and the Indonesian people about this?

And for the last question is it possible we can do a special interview with you via Zoom?

Thank you for your attention.

Didi Prambadi
Chief Operations Officer

(b) (6)

phone: (b) (6)

email:

private

Indonesian Lantern Magazine or indonesianlantern.com is more than just a magazine.

Each issue of Indonesianlantern.com raises its unique and meaningful voice to provide a reference point to Indonesian community navigating the often rough terrain of life in America. It also celebrates our rich culture and heritage.

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From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: Request for comment - The Guardian
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 10:28:42 AM

From: Julian Borger (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 9:50:54 AM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Request for comment

Can you confirm that VOA foreign journalists are not having their visas renewed?

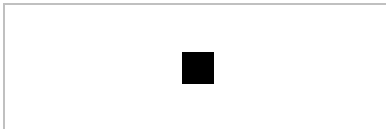
Julian Borger
world affairs editor
Guardian News & Media

M (b) (6)
E: (b) (6)

twitter: (b) (6)

[Public key](#)

-



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From: (b) (6)
To: Jonathan Bronitsky
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: The Wrap and CPJ Resarcher
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 3:15:37 PM

From: Ellefson, Lindsey (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 3:03 PM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: confirmation request

Hi, (b) (6) !

Hope you're well since we spoke last!

Can you confirm the NPR reporting that a number of foreign nationals working for VOA won't have their visas extended?
<https://www.npr.org/2020/07/09/889301025/u-s-broadcasting-agency-will-not-extend-visas-for-its-foreign-journalists>

Thank you!
Lindsey

From: Katherine Jacobsen (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 2:55 PM
To: Public Relations (b) (6)
Subject: visas/ request for comment

Hello,

I'm a researcher at the Committee to Protect Journalists and am writing to find out more about visa restrictions on VOA journalists. (<https://www.npr.org/2020/07/09/889301025/u-s-broadcasting-agency-will-not-extend-visas-for-its-foreign-journalists>)

NPR and the Washington Post are both reporting that foreign nationals working for VOA will not have their visas extended once they expire. Is that accurate?

And how many journalists will not be able to stay in the U.S. because of these new restrictions?

Thank you for your time.
Best,
Katherine

Katherine Jacobsen

Committee to Protect Journalists

(b) (6)

www.cpj.org

From: (b) (6)
To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: Time-sensitive request for comment from POLITICO
Date: Thursday, September 24, 2020 9:32:00 AM
Attachments: [2020-09-24 - Jamie Fly Written Testimony.pdf](#)

From: Daniel Lippman <dlippman@politico.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2020 9:09 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); Public Affairs (b) (6)
Subject: Time-sensitive request for comment from POLITICO

Hey guys,

Do you have a comment? My deadline is ASAP.

Many thanks,
Daniel

From: (b) (6)
To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: VOA NewsCenter Interview Request
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 11:29:11 AM

Hello Diane, Forwarding this media inquiry from VOA.

Thanks,

(b) (6) USAGM Public Affairs

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 11:21 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); Public Affairs (b) (6); USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6)
Subject: NewsCenter Interview Request

Good morning Jonathan/USAGM Public Affairs:

I am writing to check on the availability of Mr. Pack for a short, taped television interview early next week. The interview will be included in the NewsCenter's preview coverage of the September 24th House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on USAGM.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the issues likely to be raised in this hearing and to give Mr. Pack a chance to respond to those concerns. These topics will include the removal of USAGM officials and the decision to not renew J-1 visas for some VOA language service journalists. This interview will also give Mr. Pack the opportunity to share his vision for the future of the agency.

The interview can be conducted at any time next Monday-Wednesday that is convenient for his schedule.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about this request. You are welcome to give me a call at (b) (6)

Best,

(b) (6)

***Congressional Correspondent
NewsCenter, Voice of America***

(b) (6) (work cell)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Inquiry: WashPost question for you - J-1 Visa
Date: Friday, July 31, 2020 2:07:18 PM

Hello Jonathan, Forwarding this media inquiry.

thx, (b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2020 2:03 PM
To: Farhi, Paul <Paul.Farhi@washpost.com>; USAGM Public Affairs Staff (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Cc: Public Relations (b) (6)
Subject: RE: WashPost question for you

Hi Paul,

Very good to hear from you, as always.

On the J-1 visa matter, we are referring all questions to the USAGM Public Affairs team—which is copied here.

Never hesitate to contact me and VOA Public Relations on any matters involving Voice of America. It is always a good practice to include the PR e-mail address on queries since there are occasions each of us are away from e-mail.

Best,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Deputy Director (Outreach and Engagement)

VOA Public Relations

330 Independence Ave., SW

Washington, DC 20237

Direct (b) (6)

Main:

Cell:

(b) (6)

www.insidevoa.com

@insidevoa

From: Farhi, Paul <Paul.Farhi@washpost.com>

Sent: Friday, July 31, 2020 1:44 PM

To: (b) (6)

Subject: Re: WashPost question for you

Hi again, (b) (6) ...I'd like to get VOA's comment for a story I'm writing today about the visa-renewal (or non-renewal) issue. I've spoken to several staffers who are about to disappear from your ranks because they can't get their visas renewed by USAGM.

Can you tell me how many VOA staffers are working on J1 visas right now?

Also, what will you do once these people are required to leave? Can you hire domestic journalists to their jobs?

Thanks...Paul

Paul Farhi
Washington Post

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 8:23 PM

To: Farhi, Paul <Paul.Farhi@washpost.com>

Cc: Public Relations (b) (6)

Subject: Re: WashPost question for you

CAUTION: EXTERNAL SENDER

Hi Paul,

I will look into this and see if I can get you an answer. Can you tell me what your deadline is on this?

Best,

(b) (6)

Sent from my iPhone

> On Jul 8, 2020, at 7:54 PM, Farhi, Paul <Paul.Farhi@washpost.com> wrote:

>

> Hello, (b) (6) .. I'm hearing that there have been some personnel cuts at VOA's language services due to the expiration of various visas and a decision not to extend them by USAGM. Can you tell me anything about this?

>

> Thanks for your help...Paul

>

- > Paul Farhi
- > Washington Post

From: (b) (6)
To: [USAGM Public Affairs Staff](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Media query: Court injunction on USAGM
Date: Saturday, November 21, 2020 9:53:25 AM

Dear USAGM

I am reporting for Voice of America on an order issued by a DC court yesterday that in part grants preliminary injunction to protect VOA's editorial independence.

Please provide comment by 2PM ET today on the court order.

The court order says USAGM scrutiny of J-1 visas falls under USAGM's "review responsibilities."

Please can you provide an update on how many J-1 visas have been reviewed, and what the results of those cases are?

VOA Indonesian journalist (b) (6) J-1 visa request and application for a Green Card sponsorship was denied last month. What was USAGM's reason and findings that led to the denial?

Kindly respond by 2PM today,

Regards,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)
Press Freedom Editor
Voice Of America
A Free Press Matters

Phone (b) (6)
Twitter
Signal:

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Media query: J-1 Visas VOA
Date: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 8:15:48 AM

Dear Jonathan,

I am reporting on the J-1 visa issue at VOA, and am seeking an update on the visa review as well as comment on the following claims made in the course of my reporting. My deadline is 11AM today (Aug. 25). I sent the following to the main USAGM PR, but thought I'd try you directly too. Hope you can help.

Please can you provide an update on the visa review announced on July 11, including when the review will be finished and details of its findings made public.

Can you please provide details on the number of J-1 holders at VOA whose visas have expired since the review was started, and whose visas will expire by Sept. 30.

Will USAGM take steps to reinstate these employees and their visas pending the results of the review?

Please provide comment on the following claims:

That USAGM human resources failed to communicate clearly with journalist affected by the J-1 delays, or provide updates on how the visa review will impact their status

That the visa renewals risk putting VOA journalists in danger if forced to return to a hostile home country such as China

To meet my deadline, please provide comment by 11AM Tuesday August 25.

Kind regards,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Press Freedom Editor

Voice of America

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
To: (b) (6); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Media Request for Comment: USAGM J-1 renewals
Date: Saturday, July 11, 2020 1:02:59 PM

Good afternoon. Please could you provide clarification and comment on the following findings and claims in our reporting:

A USAGM spokesperson said earlier this week that the J-1 visa renewal process is aimed at improving agency management, protecting U.S. national security and ensuring that hiring authorities are not misused.

Please could you provide clarification or incidents of alleged mismanagement and hiring authority misuse that led to this decision, and what national security concerns the agency has that were not addressed in its existing vetting process.

About 30 VOA journalists have J-1 visas that have or are due to expire soon. Some have already booked flights to their home countries because they have not received a definitive decision on their visa. Will USAGM expedite their renewals?

Can you provide comment on claims that:

The visa delay endangers some VOA journalists, who risk arrest or retaliation if forced to return to their home countries because of their reporting for VOA.

The visa delays and recent leadership changes and journalist dismissals risk damaging VOA's reputation as an independent broadcaster.

That the visa delays risk hampering VOA's ability to cover the news for its large international audience during a busy news cycle when staff are focused on the pandemic, upcoming U.S. elections, and race relations.

Thanks for your time,

(b) (6)
Assignment Editor
VOA News Center

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Subject: Media: leadership (draft)
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 1:38:00 PM
Attachments: [Media - leadership - draft.docx](#)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Messaging - NPR 09.01.20 - draft (SED edits)
Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 12:12:09 PM
Attachments: [Messaging - NPR 09.01.20 - draft \(SED edits\).docx](#)

From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: (b) (6)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Messaging - NPR 09.02.20 (7p.m.)
Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 7:13:34 PM
Attachments: [Messaging - NPR 09.02.20 \(7p.m.\).docx](#)

Updated.

PRIVILEGED AND CONFIDENTIAL
ATTORNEY WORK PRODUCT
ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATION
PRE-DECISIONAL/DELIBERATIVE

From: [Sam Dewey](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Messaging - NPR 09.03.20
Date: Thursday, September 3, 2020 11:00:24 AM
Attachments: [Messaging - NPR 09.03.20.docx](#)

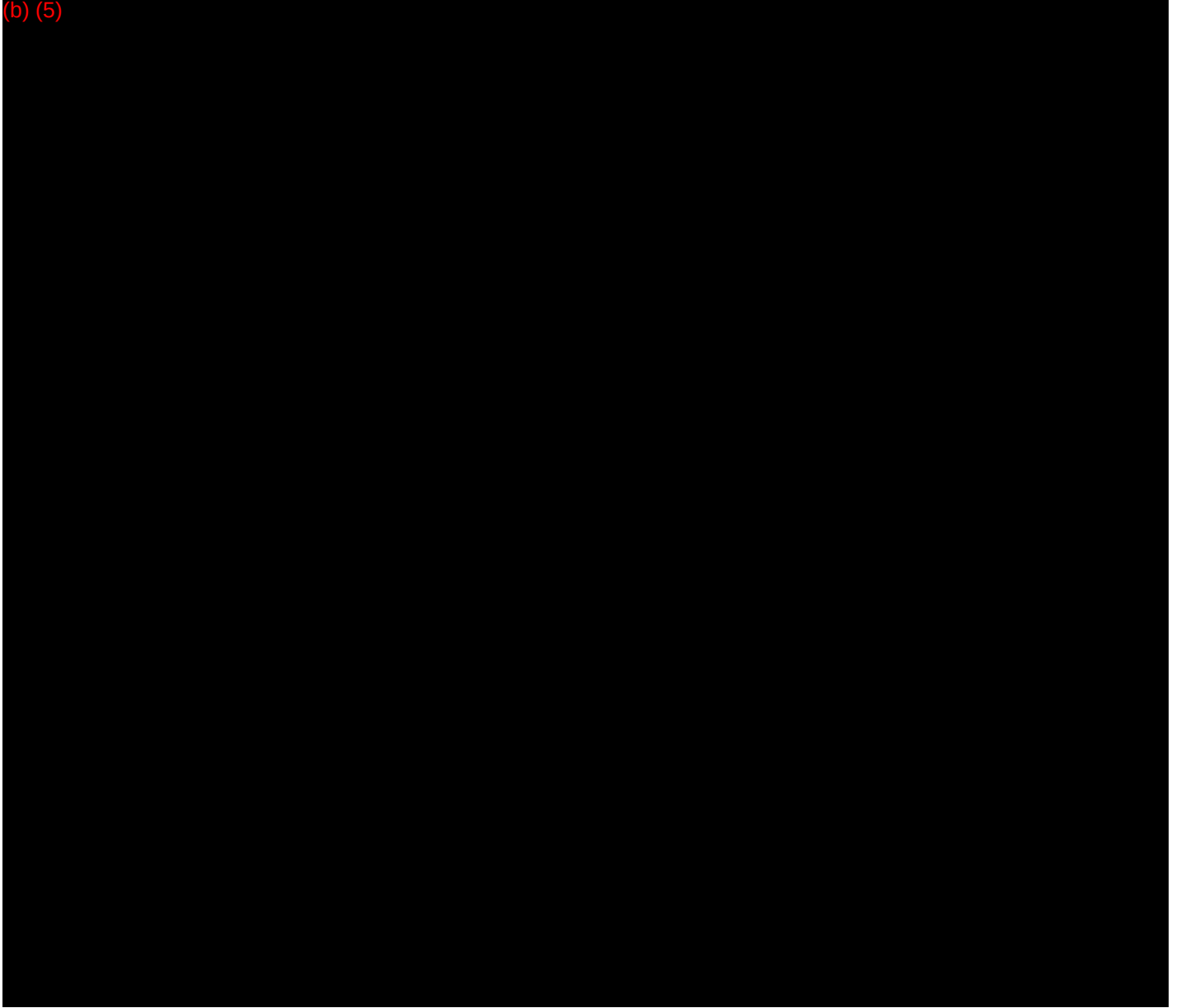
From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [CEQ2016](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Diane Cullo](#)
Subject: Messaging: J-1 / VOA (draft)
Date: Monday, August 31, 2020 2:24:00 PM

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-

J-1:

(b) (5)



-

To: [CEO2016](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Toni DeLancey](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Diane Cullo](#)
Subject: Messaging: J-1 / VOA (draft)
Date: Monday, August 31, 2020 2:23:22 PM

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

(b) (5)



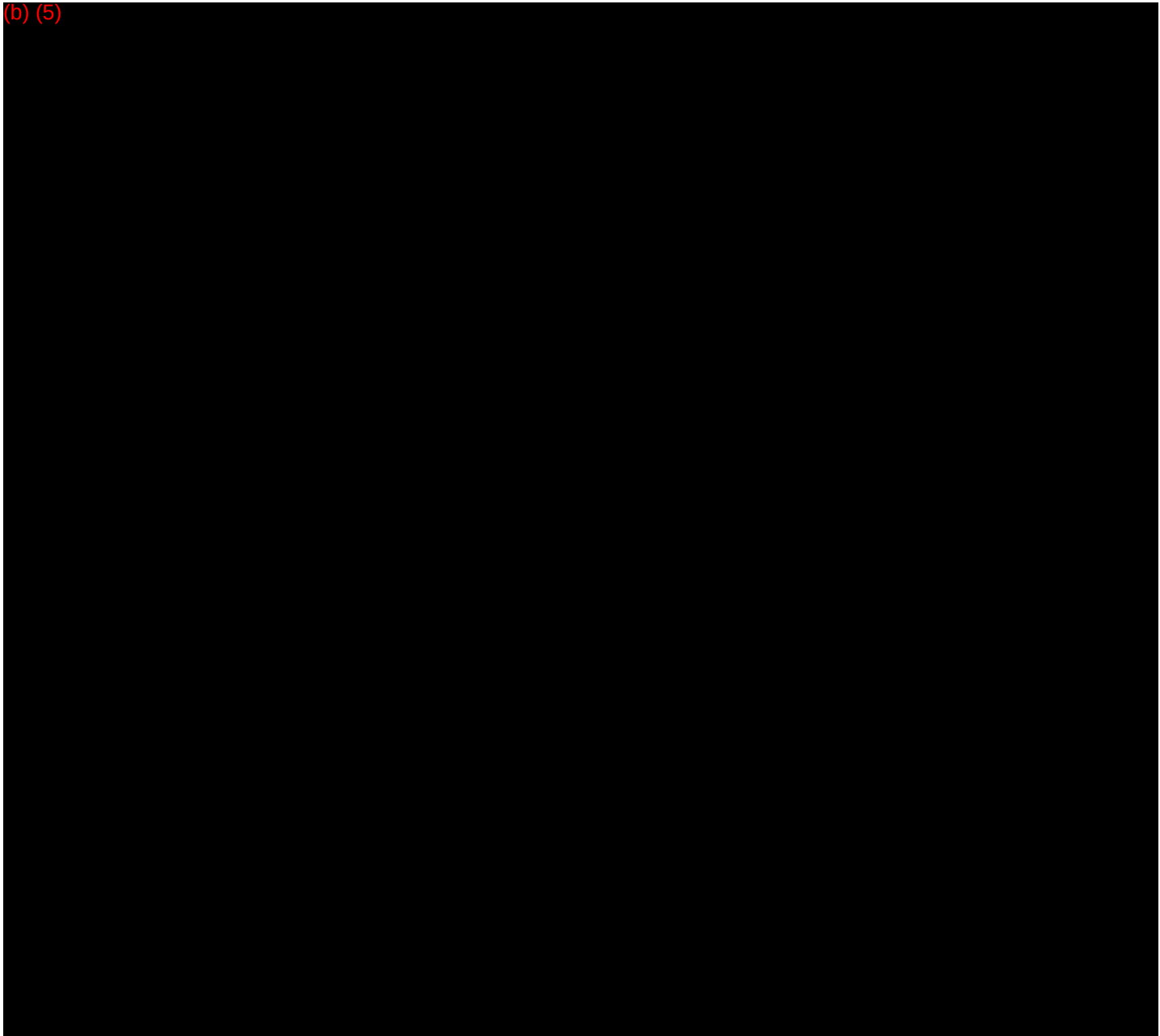
From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [CEO2016](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
Subject: Messaging: J-1 visas (draft)
Date: Saturday, July 11, 2020 4:51:00 PM
Attachments: [Messaging - personnel 4.0 - draft.docx](#)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-

ORIGINAL (already distributed):

(b) (5)

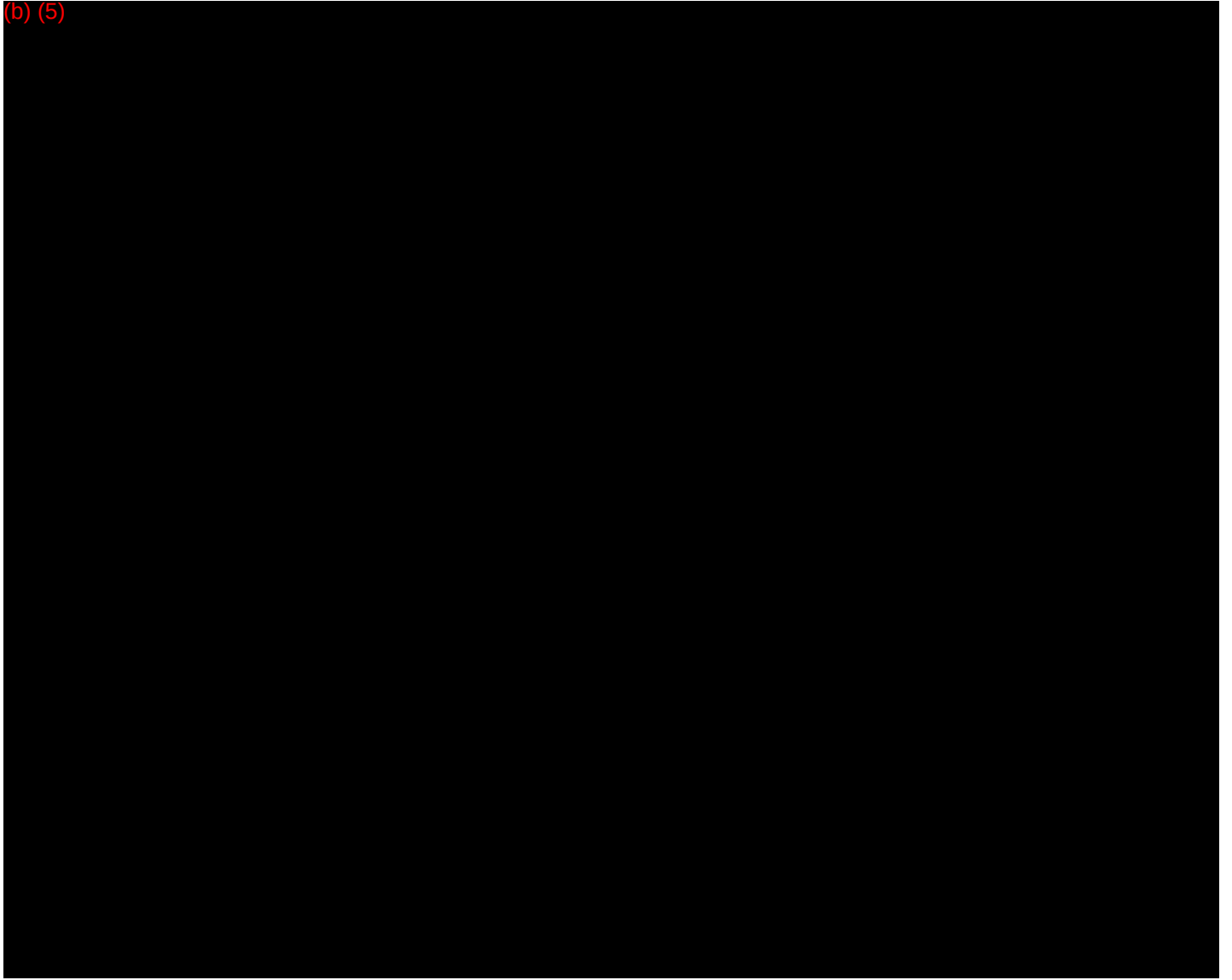


-

To: [CEO2016; Emily Pauline Newman](#)
Subject: Messaging: J-1 visas (draft)
Date: Saturday, July 11, 2020 4:51:13 PM
Attachments: [Messaging - personnel 4.0 - draft.docx](#)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

(b) (5)



-

From: /O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=437BDDFD67E846DF9C5205567DB1751B-JONATHAN BR
To: [Sam Dewey](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Diane Cullo](#)
Subject: Messaging: NPR 09.01.20 (draft)
Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 12:19:00 AM
Attachments: [Messaging - NPR 09.01.20 - draft.docx](#)
Importance: High

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Sam Dewey](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#)
Subject: Messaging: NPR 09.01.20 (draft)
Date: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 11:40:00 PM
Attachments: [Messaging - NPR 09.01.20 - draft.docx](#)
Importance: High

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

From: [CEO2016](#)
To: [Sam Dewey](#); [Diane Cullo](#); [Thad Strom](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: My latest firewall memo
Date: Monday, October 26, 2020 11:49:21 AM
Attachments: [Firewall CEO Doc MP 102620.docx](#)

I incorporated suggestions from DOJ and JB. Let me know what everyone thinks.

Best,
Michael Pack
Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Agency for Global Media

(b) (6)

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the majority of the content in this section, starting below the signature and extending down towards the bottom of the page.

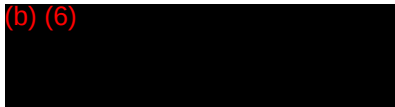
From: [CEO2016](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: New firewall doc
Date: Saturday, October 24, 2020 6:26:17 PM
Attachments: [Firewall CEO Doc MP 102420.docx](#)

Jonathan:

I would use this to send to the media and the hill, along with my revocation doc explaining more of the legal reasoning. What do you think?

Best,
Michael Pack
Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Agency for Global Media

(b) (6)

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the content of the email body below the signature.

From: [Gary Thatcher](#)
To: [Robert R. Reilly](#); (b) (6)
Cc: [John Jagers](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Sam Dewey](#)
Subject: New Russian media law - and USAGM broadcasters
Date: Wednesday, December 23, 2020 5:35:12 PM

Ted, welcome back!

Copying in you, Bob and Front Office colleagues on a matter that, unfortunately, is likely to have important consequences for RFE/RL and VOA. And perhaps sooner than we'd like.

It is the new Russian media labeling law, which grows more menacing with each iteration in the Duma.

Essentially, as you may know, the Russian media regulatory authority has named virtually every nameplate of RFE/RL as a "Foreign Agent" - and new laws in the Duma threaten repeat offenders with penalties. In the latest iterations, prison sentences up to five years are a possibility.

There is little doubt that the legislation will pass both houses of the legislature, and be signed into law by Putin. Putin has complained that certain foreign entities are "bragging" about non-compliance.

We haven't bragged, but we have made internal decisions not to comply - including declining to label our content as the work of a "foreign agent" nor pay fines.

It is complicated - to say the least.

I will make arrangements for an inbriefing for you at your convenience. There will be a meeting at the National Security Council in early January on this matter, and we're tracking it and coordinating the USAGM response.

But - and this will not surprise either of you in the least - the Kremlin can pinpoint the most inopportune times to flex muscle. And with holidays coming...

The US government - at quite senior levels - is trying to discourage Russian overreach.

The situation was summed up well in the below RFE/RL interview of the US Ambassador to Moscow, John Sullivan. The highlights are mine.

This will provide some background.

Best, Gary

<https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-us-ambassador-sullivan-interview-diplomat-visas-cyberattack-whelan/31015928.html>

Interview: Russia Blocking Visas For U.S. Diplomatic Staff, Forcing Closure Of Consulates, U.S. Ambassador Says

Russian visa restrictions for U.S. diplomatic personnel forced the closure of two consulates, the U.S. ambassador said, blaming Moscow for shutdowns that will leave Russians and American citizens living in Russia with a single diplomatic outpost to turn to in the sprawling country.

In an interview with RFE/RL, John Sullivan also suggested that new Russian legislation targeting so-called foreign agents will be "intolerable" if enforced, and that the imprisonment of U.S. citizen Paul Whelan on espionage charges was a "shocking miscarriage of justice" and a hurdle to the improvement of badly strained relations.

Sullivan accused the Russian government of forcing the United States to shutter the consulates in the Urals region city of Yekaterinburg and in Vladivostok, on the Pacific Coast.

Operations had already been suspended at the two posts due to COVID-19 restrictions, Sullivan said, but the cap of 455 visas imposed earlier by Moscow for all American diplomatic visas had forced the decision on the two consulates. The Yekaterinburg closure is temporary, he said.

"We took the decision we took because it's part of... broader problems in a bilateral diplomatic relationship between the United States and Russia, which have extended to a so-called visa impasse," he said in the interview on December 22. "We can't get visas for U.S. personnel to come to work at our consulates in Yekaterinburg [and] Vladivostok, or the embassy in Moscow."

"And without those personnel who are able to perform essential functions for health and safety risks, the risk is increasing that there could be a fire, or other safety issues," he said. "There are always potential threats to our posts... So what's happened is we can't get management officers, security officers visas."

The Russian Foreign Ministry and its chief spokeswoman did not immediately respond to e-mailed requests for comment and to a query sent via mobile phone.

The 455-visa cap was imposed as part of the tit-for-tat diplomatic punishment that began in the waning days of President Barack Obama's administration, and continued into President Donald Trump's tenure.

The U.S. government ordered the closure of Russian diplomatic compounds in rural Maryland and New York state in early 2017. Later that year, the Russian consulate in San Francisco and two other diplomatic facilities, in Washington and New York City, were shuttered.

In 2018, the Russian consulate in Seattle was ordered closed in response to the Novichok poisoning in England of a former Russian military intelligence agent, Sergei Skripal. Russia retaliated, ordering the closure of the U.S. consulate in St. Petersburg.

Sullivan's comments come as his tenure as Washington's main diplomat in Moscow may be nearing its end, with President-elect Joe Biden taking office [on January 20](#).

And they come as the U.S.-Russian relationship continues a downward spiral that stretches back at least into Obama's first term and has spanned the Trump administration's four years in office.

In an interview on December 23 with the Interfax news agency, the top Russian diplomat who handles relations with Washington signaled that Moscow had little optimism that the downward slide would be reversed, and accused top Biden officials of what he called "Russophobia."

"We are going from bad to worse. This was very typical for the past four years and so far there is no feeling that this trend has exhausted itself," Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov was **quoted as saying**.

"It would be strange to expect good things from people, many of whom made their careers on Russophobia and throwing mud at my country," he said, without naming anyone or offering details about this remark.

Imposing Costs

In Washington, meanwhile, the U.S. government is grappling with what some experts say is the largest cyberbreach, or hack, of federal computer systems ever, and U.S. officials say Russian intelligence agencies are to blame.

Biden spoke about the problem on December 22, saying that the Trump administration had been caught off-guard and that there would be a U.S. response once a formal finding of blame is made. He did not describe the potential response.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has blamed Russia, as has Attorney General William Barr. Trump, however, has suggested that China might be to blame.

Asked about the hack, Sullivan said he could not himself place blame on Moscow, pending confirmation from U.S. intelligence.

However, "there's no doubt that elements of the Russian government, the Russian security services, have engaged in sustained campaign of cyberattacks and influence on the United States," he told RFE/RL.

"But it wouldn't shock me" if it was Russia, he said. "In fact, it is consistent with behavior we've seen stretching back not just to this administration, but the prior administration as well."

"We have to continue to message the Russian government and to impose costs on those who would try to degrade, exploit, and damage our cyber infrastructure, and that would include potentially, a whole host of things," Sullivan said. He declined to say what exactly that would entail.

Sullivan also spoke a day before the Russian lower house of parliament gave final approval to a package of new legal measures that will broaden, and tighten, restrictions under the country's eight-year-old "foreign agent" law.

The original law requires organizations who receive any sort of foreign funding or support to report their activities or face financial audits. The new measures, which must be passed by the upper house and signed by Putin to become law, would expand the scope of individuals and groups that can fall under the "foreign agent" label and add new restrictions and registration and reporting requirements for such groups.

They would also require the media to note the label whenever such a designated group is mentioned, and introduces possible criminal liability for individual journalists and bloggers in Russia.

Russian and foreign rights groups have denounced the measures, which Sullivan said appeared to be focused on U.S. media organizations like Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) but potentially could be broadened to target other foreign media in Russia.

"This is just the start of what could be a very dangerous undertaking more broadly, not just for the United States," he said.

While it is broader than a bilateral issue, Sullivan said, the new

legislation "has gotten the attention of the most senior officials of the U.S. government who have significant concerns about the potential for restrictions" on media organizations like RFE/RL.

"And if there is follow-through," he said, he is "pretty confident" that "there will be a response by the United States, because it would be intolerable."

Paul Whelan, Aleksei Navalny

In the interview, Sullivan repeated past criticism of Russia for the jailing of Whelan, the American who was arrested in Moscow in December 2018 on charges of espionage. A former U.S. Marine, Whelan, who said he was in Russia at the time for a friend's wedding, was later convicted and sentenced to 16 years in prison.

Whelan's family has said he was convicted on sham evidence, in a closed trial that violated basic judicial norms. His lawyers have suggested that Russia was seeking to negotiate Whelan's release in exchange for the release of one or more Russians serving time in U.S. prisons on various charges, including notorious convicted arms trafficker Viktor Bout.

"It's really a shocking miscarriage of justice for Paul," Sullivan said. "It's a significant impediment to improved relations between the United States and Russia."

One round of U.S. expulsions of Russian diplomats followed the March 2018 poisoning of Skripal and his daughter in England. A sophisticated military grade nerve agent called Novichok was blamed for that and for the death of a British woman who came in contact with the substance a few months later.

Two years later, after Russian anti-corruption activist Aleksei Navalny nearly died on a flight from Siberia to Moscow, German authorities blamed a Novichok-related chemical.

The Skripal poisoning, Sullivan was, "an extraterritorial assassination, extrajudicial attempted murder of an individual using a banned chemical weapon."

He said the United States had worked through the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons, an international treaty watchdog known as the OPCW, and in cooperation with Germany, whose government was quick to accuse Russia of the Navalny poisoning.

"It's also not just a bilateral problem between Germany and Russia. It's a problem for all countries that are concerned about human rights and enforcing the prohibitions on the development and use of chemical weapons," he said.

"Our initial focus has been on the OPCW. But I wouldn't say that it's necessarily going to be to be limited to that," he said.

Sullivan, who served as the No. 2 official at the State Department before being confirmed as ambassador in December 2019, declined to say if he would be staying on as ambassador; typically, U.S. ambassadors submit their resignation upon the arrival of a new president.

"There's a breach of trust, I think it's safe to say, between the U.S. government and the Russian government. But I for one, and I know many Americans have trust and faith in the Russian people," he said.

"My hope is that the [consulate closure] is temporary, and that we can stop digging the hole that we've dug on our respective sides, restore the trust, and take advantage of that...broader, deeper relationship between the United States and Russia," he said.

Gary Thatcher
Associate Director
US Agency for Global Media
330 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20037
Phone - (b) (6)
(b) (6)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [Public Affairs](#); [USAGM Public Affairs Staff](#)
Subject: NewsCenter Interview Request
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 11:21:24 AM

Good morning Jonathan/USAGM Public Affairs:

I am writing to check on the availability of Mr. Pack for a short, taped television interview early next week. The interview will be included in the NewsCenter's preview coverage of the September 24th House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on USAGM.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the issues likely to be raised in this hearing and to give Mr. Pack a chance to respond to those concerns. These topics will include the removal of USAGM officials and the decision to not renew J-1 visas for some VOA language service journalists. This interview will also give Mr. Pack the opportunity to share his vision for the future of the agency.

The interview can be conducted at any time next Monday-Wednesday that is convenient for his schedule.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about this request. You are welcome to give me a call at (b) (6).

Best,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Congressional Correspondent
NewsCenter, Voice of America

(b) (6)

|

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Cc: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Sam Dewey](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Subject: NYT: Trump Appointee Is Turning Voice of America Into Partisan Outlet, Lawsuit Says
Date: Saturday, October 10, 2020 10:02:00 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

Trump Appointee Is Turning Voice of America Into Partisan Outlet Lawsuit Says

Michael Pack, the chief executive of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, and his aides repeatedly meddled in the editorial affairs of Voice of America, the suit says.



Since assuming his post in June, Michael Pack, the chief of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, has thrust his relatively unknown organization into the spotlight. Credit...Anna Moneymaker for The New York Times



By [Pranshu Verma](#)

Oct. 8, 2020

WASHINGTON — Five officials suspended from the government’s global media agency sued its chief executive and top aides on Thursday, claiming they broke the law in repeatedly seeking to turn a news service under its purview into **a mouthpiece for pro-Trump propaganda** [four months on, does the NYT have evidence of one instance in which USAGM has proactively pushed for a single piece of “pro-Trump” content?].

The 84-page lawsuit asserts that Michael Pack, the chief executive of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, or his aides have interrogated journalists at the Voice of America who have censured Mr. Pack or written articles top officials believed were critical of President Trump, instilling fear across the agency.

Mr. Pack’s aide, Samuel E. Dewey, for example, began a retaliatory investigation against the Voice of America’s White House bureau chief, Steve Herman, **after he signed a letter in August** [whistleblower complaints from former as well as current VOA employees against Herman began virtually the day MP started] saying Mr. Pack risked “crippling” the news outlet.

As part of that investigation, Mr. Dewey and another aide scrutinized Mr. Herman’s **“private social media activity** [all of Herman’s social media activity was public] for any hint of bias” against Mr. Trump, compiling a 30-page dossier that they sent to Voice of America’s top executive “in a clear effort to pressure the acting director to take action.”

In another episode, Mr. Dewey pressed the chief of Voice of America’s Urdu service over whether it had published enough content about civil unrest over the summer that highlighted the effect of what he described as “mass rioting.”

Mr. Dewey demanded to know if the news service had covered statements by Attorney General William P. Barr about “those who lived in underserved communities and had their property damaged.” Mr. Trump and his supporters have repeatedly tried to cast protests against police brutality and racial inequality as riots and looting.

The lawsuit, [reported earlier by NPR](#), claims those instances violated a firewall provision that prevents Mr. Pack or his aides at the U.S. Agency for Global Media from meddling in the editorial affairs of Voice of America, or the other news outlets it oversees. The plaintiffs also said those interventions highlighted a core truth about working at the Voice of America under Mr. Pack’s leadership.

“Journalists are safe where they favor the administration but not where they don’t,”

the lawsuit states.

Representatives from the U.S. Agency for Global Media did not immediately return a request for comment. [Did we not send in a statement from MP almost a day ago?]

Since taking office in June, Mr. Pack thrust his relatively unknown agency into the spotlight. In one of his first moves, he swiftly fired the heads of the four news outlets and an internet technology nonprofit under his oversight. He also replaced the bipartisan board that supervises the organizations with allies of the Trump administration.

Since then, Mr. Pack has purged staff critical of his leadership; starved organizations he oversees from basic funding; and is withholding visa approvals for at least 76 foreign journalists at the Voice of America, some of whom are being deported because he has deemed them a “security risk.”

Critics of Mr. Pack assert he has run the agency in an authoritarian manner [hyper polemical]: finding any issue that confirms his perception of liberal bias at the organization and doling out punishment in ways that intimidate employees who have been critical of the Trump administration.

“This is very Stalinist,” said Bricio Segovia [NYT fails to mention that Segovia himself was removed from VOA for egregious violations of agency principles in addition to standard journalistic ethics], a former White House correspondent for V.O.A.’s Spanish language TV service, who left the agency last month. “When you have people acting out of fear, that’s actually how most companies work in countries like Russia.”

One of the most glaring examples, plaintiffs said, occurred in late July, when a two-minute video [it was not just a “video,” but a political ad created by a U.S.-based political action committee] posted on the news outlet’s Urdu-language website featured former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. urging Muslim Americans to vote and criticizing Mr. Trump for his “Muslim ban.”

The video was a clear breach of the outlet’s editorial standards, but it also presented Mr. Pack the ability to send a message, plaintiffs said [if it’s not the CEO’s job to enforce the charters and missions of the organizations over which he sees, then what exactly is it?]. Mr. Pack’s top advisers participated in an investigation into the clip — once again circumventing the agency’s firewall provisions [coordinating with VOA to ensure that it’s not violating its own Charter and, thus, public law, is a “firewall” breach?]. Shortly after the investigation concluded, the four journalists involved were fired.

Aside from violating editorial guidelines, others have said Mr. Pack has also threatened his agency’s ability to combat disinformation across the globe.

Mr. Pack has withheld nearly \$20 million [not true] in funding to the Open Technology Fund, an internet freedom group that his agency oversees. The fund helped create encryption products — like Signal and Tor — used by over two billion

people in 60 countries. Now, it has been forced to suspend **80 percent of its projects** [how is this being verified since OTF refuses to disclose information on its projects, in violation of its grantee agreement, no less], many of which allow citizens in China, Iran, Venezuela and Belarus to [circumvent stringent government firewalls](#) and read uncensored news, according to internet freedom groups.

As the critiques of Mr. Pack have grown, Democrats and even some Republicans [are becoming increasingly furious](#) by Mr. Pack's leadership.

"He's the wrong person for the job," said Representative Eliot L. Engel, Democrat of New York and the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. "He should resign. And if he doesn't, the president should fire him."

Pranshu Verma is a reporter in the Washington bureau, and part of the 2020 New York Times Fellowship class. He reports on diplomacy and transportation policy. [@pranshuverma](#)

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To: [Diane Cullo](#)
Cc: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Sam Dewey](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Subject: NYT: Trump Appointee Is Turning Voice of America Into Partisan Outlet, Lawsuit Says
Date: Saturday, October 10, 2020 9:54:50 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

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Since assuming his post in June, Michael Pack, the chief of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, has thrust his relatively unknown organization into the spotlight. Credit...Anna Moneymaker for The New York Times



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"He's the wrong person for the job," said Representative Eliot L. Engel, Democrat of New York and the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. "He should resign. And if he doesn't, the president should fire him."

Pranshu Verma is a reporter in the Washington bureau, and part of the 2020 New York Times Fellowship class. He reports on diplomacy and transportation policy. [@pranshuverma_](#)

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From: [Tahmas, Naweed W.](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Observances
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 11:12:09 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Draft - 2020 observances.xlsx](#)

Regards,
Naweed Tahmas
Deputy White House Liaison
U.S. Office of Personnel Management



From: [David Folkenflik](#)
To: [Michael Pack](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: One additional deadline question
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 12:11:54 PM

Mr. Pack -

I know the agency announced earlier this summer it was undertaking a visa-by-visa review of applications and renewals for J1s held by foreign nationals.

How many have you approved?

Thank you

DBF

David Folkenflik
Media Correspondent
NPR NEWS
11 W 42nd St
19th Floor
New York NY 10036
o) (b) (6)
mobile) (b) (6)
e) (b) (6)
Twitter: davidfolkenflik

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: One Pagers
Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 4:45:31 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Pre-decisional and deliberative

Do you have one pagers for anything on OTF/OIF, J-1 visas, and the initial personnel changes that I can use to craft the responses to congressional inquiries?

Best,

(b) (6)
Special Assistant
U.S. Agency for Global Media
w/ (b) (6)
c/ (b) (6)



U.S. Agency for Global Media
330 Independence Ave. SW | Washington, DC 20237
<http://usagm.gov>

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Subject: OPA: USAGM style guide (draft)
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 1:34:00 PM
Attachments: [USAGM Style Guide - November Draft + edits.docx](#)

Hi, (b) (6).

Please find suggested, track-change edits attached. Namely, I set off some items with quotation marks and included several examples to make items clearer. This draft has been approved by OCEO. And since this will be a living document, it doesn't have to be perfect right now. Feel free to proceed as you see fit.

Thanks for your time and help putting this together.

V/R,
Jonathan

From: [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: OPM
Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:02:39 AM
Attachments: [Atch 1_OPM SuitEA July 2020 Follow-up Report of USAGM Assessment.pdf](#)
[image001.png](#)
[Atch 2_OPM 2019 Final Report of USAGM Assessment.pdf](#)
[Atch 3_OPM 2017 Final Report of USAGM Assessment.pdf](#)
[Atch 4_OPM 2012 Letter to BBG.pdf](#)
[OPM Letter on Suitability and Credentialing Determinations for USAGM.pdf](#)

Mora Namdar, Esq
Senior Advisor to the CEO
Acting Vice President for Legal, Compliance, and Risk
US Agency for Global Media
3300C
w (b) (6)
c) [REDACTED]



U.S. Agency for Global Media | Broadcasting Board of Governors
330 Independence Ave. SW | Washington, DC 20237
<http://usagm.gov>

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Pre-decisional and Deliberative Communication

To: [John Jaggars](#); [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: OPR: Director / selection process (20201130-48458)
Date: Monday, December 28, 2020 9:26:57 AM
Attachments: (b) (6) [federal resume Dec 2020 \(1\).pdf](#)
(b) (6) [Resume 8-20-2020.pdf](#)
(b) (6) [Federal Resume 12-11-20.pdf](#)
(b) (6) [-- Director of Policy and Research - USAGM.pdf](#)
(b) (6) [resume USAGM 12-20.pdf](#)
(b) (6) [Dec2020Resume.pdf](#)
(b) (6) [USAGM Director of Policy and Research -- \(b\) \(6\) .pdf](#)

Toni and John,

Attached are the résumés of the seven applicants for the OPR Director position (GS-0301-15). Please review them, then let's discuss along with additional application information.

Thank you.

V/R,
Jonathan

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Subject: OTF: media references (draft)
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 4:47:00 PM
Attachments: [Draft - OTF-media references - draft.docx](#)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

To: [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Subject: OTF: media references (draft)
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 4:47:04 PM
Attachments: [Draft - OTF-media references - draft.docx](#)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

From: [Ted Lipien](#)
To: [Rick Stengel](#); [Brian Conniff](#); [Rumana Ahmed](#); [Bruce Sherman](#)
Cc: [CEO2016](#); [Elez Biberaj](#); [Kelu Chao](#); [John Lippman](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Partisan Bias at VOA Tolerated by Former Management Between 2016 and 2020
Date: Tuesday, December 8, 2020 6:12:48 PM

Dear Honorable Mr. Stengel and Members of the Biden-Harris USAGM Transition Team.

[Please share with other team members: Dana Smith, Raina Kumra and Margaret Taylor, for whom I do not have e-mail addresses.]

I thought that you might find some interesting insights about USAGM in two analyses-reports written by former senior Voice of America (VOA) correspondent, former VOA foreign and domestic bureau chief and former VOA foreign language service chief Dan Robinson. Dan is one of the most respected VOA journalists who retired a few years ago after a distinguished career. As Dan Robinson himself pointed out in some of his other reports published by mainstream media, including “Columbia Journalism Review” CJR, he is a registered Democrat who was going to vote for Joe Biden. But like many of us who volunteer at BBG - USAGM Watch, regardless of our party affiliations or lack thereof, both he and I are deeply concerned that VOA has become politicized and has been for more than a few years a highly partisan media outlet with some impact in the United States, including U.S. elections, and has engaged in illegal targeting of Americans for partisan and ideological reasons. (As reported by former House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman former Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA), the former USAGM/VOA management admitted to illegal targeting of Americans with VOA Facebook ads, but other even more serious violations have also occurred.) Those of us who actually analyze VOA content on a regular basis know very well that the VOA bias has not been at all in favor of Trump, as many may now think from reading or watching mainstream media reports, but are very much in favor of some Democratic Party politicians and liberal political causes.

The SIDEBAR to Dan Robinson’s analysis is particularly interesting because it quotes comments by one of the very few conservative journalists who are left at the agency but are afraid to speak out. These comments clearly establish the leadership failure which produced the VOA anti-Trump political ad in 2016 and the pro-Biden 2020 political ad. To my knowledge, no one among VOA journalists or lower-level and mid-level VOA management was even publicly reprimanded for the 2016 anti-Trump VOA Ukrainian campaign ad. The incident was hidden just as the 2016 consultants report on bias in VOA content. Since no meaningful actions were taken by the former management after the 2016 video [<https://youtu.be/CGDVUOyQJAM>], in which Trump was called “pig,” “mutt,” and other offensive names and physical violence against him was condoned—the first such call for violence against an American politician issued in a VOA program in VOA’s history—the 2020 VOA Urdu video [<https://youtu.be/r2iL0uy6iL8>] did not surprise any of us who are committed to the VOA Charter regardless of our own political leanings, whatever they might be.

Best Regards,

Ted Lipien
former VOA acting associate director
former VOA Eurasia Division director
former BBG regional marketing director (Munich and Prague)

former VOA Polish Service chief during Solidarity and martial law period

SIDEBAR: Where 2016 Consultant Report Recommendations Missed The Mark

USAGM Watch Commentary

EDITOR'S NOTE: A USAGM staffer reacts to key aspects of the [Executive Summary](#) of the 2016 consultant report solicited by and submitted to former VOA director Amanda Bennett. The full report, paid for by U.S. taxpayers, has not been found and produced by the agency despite repeated requests by journalists.

Bias in News [from 2016 Consultant Report]

“The perception of biased coverage is real among multiple VOA reporters and editors. Biased coverage threatens the credibility of the overwhelming majority of VOA journalists who strive for fairness, balance and accuracy. It’s vital that VOA leadership take visible steps to communicate that bias is unacceptable and that the integrity of VOA reporting is sacrosanct.”

USAGM Staffer: It’s not enough to acknowledge there is “bias” and say it needs to be dealt with. If you can’t name the TYPE of bias that exists, how can you expect VOA management to take “visible steps” to fix it? The most serious bias problem that VOA has had for years has been the left wing/liberal bias of its almost exclusively liberal-minded journalists in favor of Democrats and against Republicans and conservatives. There is no reference to that problem in this summary. As a result, the anti-bias “training” that Bennett ordered her staff to take in the following years was worthless, because (based on what I witnessed) the training course did not not involve any study of the MANY examples of pervasive liberal bias in VOA’s actual reporting. The course merely looked at bias as a general problem that journalists should try to avoid. So, trainees who didn’t think there was anything wrong with their own liberal bias, and who were not confronted during the course with EXAMPLES of that bias, would not have been inclined to change the way they did their jobs in the slightest. And as you can see from VOA’s reporting on U.S. politics this past election year, that’s exactly what happened.

Recommendations on bias from 2016 Consultant Report

Create a safe avenue for staffers to report bias concerns without fear of reprisal. Regularly remind staffers about the responsibility to report perceived bias. Put division directors on notice that that they will be held accountable for bias in their services.

USAGM Staffer: The English News Center has NOT been held accountable at all for its liberal bias, because it has flagrantly continued and flaunted that bias for the past 4 years. Also, there are NO safe avenues for staffers to report liberal bias, because News Center managers have shown themselves, in their regular emails to staff, to be of one ideological mindset, and to be defiant in the face of criticism from Trump and Michael Pack, rather than being humble in the face of criticism, looking in the mirror, and soliciting constructive criticism from their peers. When staffers see this kind of messaging from their newsroom leaders, HOW can they have faith that their legitimate concerns will be considered seriously? On the contrary, they would be rightly concerned about being ridiculed and ostracized for going against the party line.

Consider more frequent content audits to determine if bias is evident.

USAGM Staffer: I don't know of any such audits that have been conducted in the past 4 years.

In communications about bias, clarify the difference between bias and aggressive accountability reporting. Tough, authoritatively sourced coverage that calls out abuses of power is not biased

USAGM Staffer: Wrong. Even aggressive accountability reporting NEEDS to fairly reflect the views of the people who are alleged to have abused their power (and perhaps even the views of their supporters), as distasteful as those views might be to the journalists doing the reporting. The ethical requirement for a journalist to eschew bias isn't thrown out the window just because you as a VOA journalist, and many other like-minded people, want to "go after" a person in power.

READ: 2016 Report Confirmed Problem of Political Bias At Voice of America. OPINION by Dan Robinson, USAGM Watch, December 6, 2020

Link: <https://bbgwatch.com/bbgwatch/sidebar-where-2016-consultant-report-recommendations-missed-the-mark/>

Link: <https://www.usagmwatch.com/sidebar-where-2016-consultant-report-recommendations-missed-the-mark/>

2016 Report Confirmed Problem of Political Bias At Voice of America

OPINION

Trump USAGM CEO Michael Pack Was Attacked For Attempts to Focus on Problem

by [Dan Robinson](#)

It was May of 2016 and Amanda Bennett was only a few weeks into what would become a nearly four year stint as director of the Voice of America, among the “plum” jobs in Washington, D.C.

Bennett was just getting her feet wet, and at the time was dependent on a group of longtime embedded VOA managers that she would at one point describe as a “fantastic leadership team.”

She had received fair warning, from former VOA employees and extensive reporting by the independent watchdog website [BBG and USAGM Watch](#), of disturbing issues at VOA, located in what has long been one of the most dysfunctional of federal agencies.

Some VOA journalists were using their taxpayer-funded positions to engage in self-promotion and campaign for political causes, a fact little known to most Americans. VOA’s website and digital operations were plagued by failures in breaking news coverage, and inaccuracies in content.

Both VOA and what was then called the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) were increasingly seen by U.S. lawmakers as moribund. A Republican-led and eventually bipartisan effort in Congress proposed major restructuring – there was little patience left on Capitol Hill where the agency was increasingly considered to be “broken,” “rudderless,” and “worthless.” President Obama signed the reform legislation in December 2016 to create a powerful agency CEO position and to make the BBG Board purely advisory.

In a meeting with one former VOA reporter, Bennett asked how anyone could know if VOA was succeeding or not, as if incompetence in covering breaking news, on-air mistakes, and management dysfunction would not be visible to outsiders.

Bennett would not have left her former life to take over a notoriously troubled agency with seemingly intractable problems, to focus just on the negatives.

That preference notwithstanding, on May 23rd 2016 she sent a memo to staff announcing the hiring of three consultants: Joyce Dehli, Tom Detzel, and Marcy McGinnis.

Dehli was a co-chair of the Pulitzer Prize Board. Bennett herself had been part of a Pulitzer winning newspaper reporting team, a fact that boosted her credibility with VOA’s

government-paid civilian journalistic force. She is married to former *Washington Post* publisher and businessman Donald E. Graham. As then chairman of *The Washington Post*, he was a Pulitzer Prize Board member in the 2000s, as was Bennett. She was then editor of *Lexington Herald-Leader*, later editor of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, and at the end of her time on the Pulitzer Prize Board, executive editor of Enterprise, Bloomberg News.

The memo described Detzel as having led award-winning investigative teams at *ProPublica*, and collaborated on projects with *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and PBS.

McGinnis had been a Senior Vice President, News Coverage, at CBS News, and had helped launch Al Jazeera America.

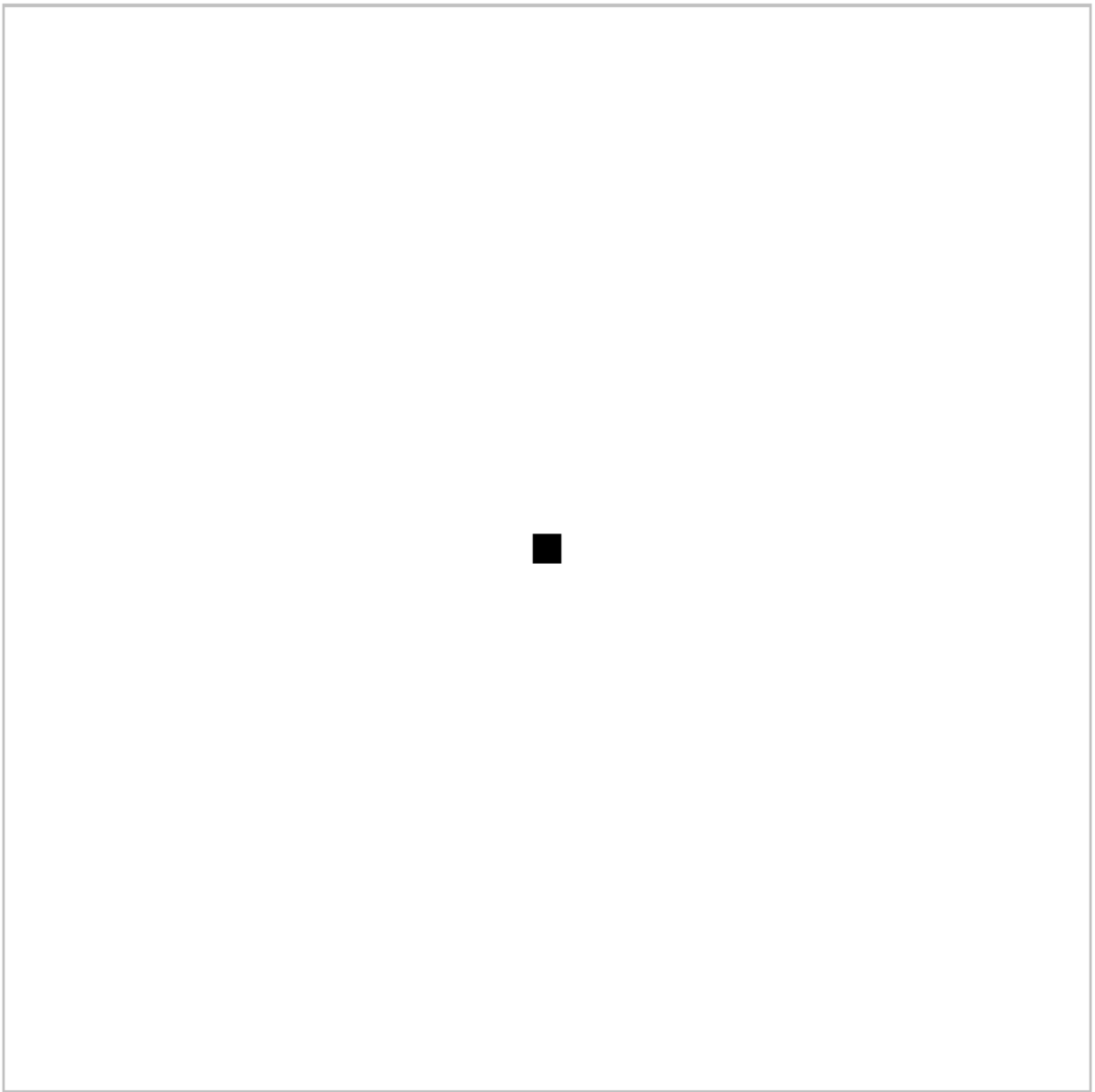
As Bennett told it in her memo, this short-term consultant team had a wide-ranging mission: “To assist us in benchmarking our entire operation to the best in the world” and “digging deep into all our journalism on all platforms.”

Panel members would have “access to our written work, both web and mobile; to listen to our broadcasts; to watch our shows and to engage with our social media” and would “[have] a free hand in asking to interview anyone they want, and to hold meetings of any groups they feel they need to learn more about or from.”

Between the date of the Bennett memo and today at the end of 2020, no final report by the consultant group or any of its findings is known to have ever been distributed to VOA and USAGM staff.

If any final report actually does exist, VOA and USAGM management have done their best to bury it – a product paid for by taxpayer funds has been hidden from public view and potential media scrutiny.

In 2018, I submitted a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to USAGM, then still headed by John Lansing (who now heads National Public Radio) requesting a range of electronic and written records relating to the consultant panel.



USAGM slow walked this and other FOIA requests, applying a familiar tactic employed when government agencies seek to avoid wider disclosure – saying the requests were over-broad and imposed an unacceptable burden on staff.

Fast forward to 2020. I have discovered that staff of USAGM CEO Michael Pack attempted to learn from agency managers whether any written record existed of the consultant panel's work.

Almost immediately, I was told that roadblocks were erected by longtime senior officials at 330 Independence Avenue (the VOA and USAGM headquarters) who denied knowledge of any final report, or an executive summary.

However, this reporter finally obtained a copy of the [Executive Summary](#) the consultants sent to Bennett and we present its contents here.

It's details confirm the depth of problems at VOA, especially regarding an issue that USAGM CEO Pack attempted to focus on – political bias by VOA's taxpayer-funded staff.

EXCERPT FROM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"The perception of biased coverage is real among multiple VOA reporters and editors," the summary stated. "It's vital that VOA leadership take visible steps to communicate that bias is unacceptable and that the integrity of VOA reporting is sacrosanct."

Asserting that the "overwhelming majority of VOA journalists . . . strive for fairness, balance and accuracy" the consultants nonetheless urged Bennett to create "a safe avenue for staffers to report bias concerns without fear of reprisal".

They also recommended regular reminders to staffers "about the responsibility to report perceived bias," and "[putting] division directors on notice that they will be held accountable for bias in their services."

And the summary said there should be more frequent content audits to determine if bias is evident, and [in communications about bias] “clarify the difference between bias and aggressive accountability reporting.”



The significance of the emergence of the report summary cannot be over-stated.

At the very beginning of her four years as VOA director, Bennett and others with access to the full report, and this summary, were made fully aware of the kind of issues involving that BBG and USAGM Watch had reported on for years.

What followed is part of the historical record: the problem of political bias in the reporting of VOA journalists, and in their social media feeds, continued in the first term of Donald Trump. Things worsened as the 2020 presidential election approached.

Bennett ordered all VOA staff to undergo training (provided by an outside contractor) in avoiding political bias in reporting. These sessions continued as of mid-2020, with employees warned of negative repercussions in their personnel files should they choose not to participate.

“VOA’s Best Practices Guide” was repeatedly updated – sometimes it seemed in direct response to BBG and USAGM Watch reporting – to reflect changes aimed at dealing with what seemed like an out-of-control bias situation.

Already facing a tsunami of attacks by elite left-leaning media for decisions he made since becoming CEO, Michael Pack [issued a statement](#) in late 2020 seeking to enforce existing rules or, as his critics have charged, exert control over what some VOA reporters were doing in their reporting and on social media. An agency spokesman said that the CEO’s memo was “clarifying *long-standing* agency Conflicts of Interest and Social Media policies” and that “No new policies were established.”

Titled “Guidance on Conflicts of Interest” the memo stated that it would be a conflict of interest for any agency journalist “to participate personally and substantially in reporting on an issue: (1) in which they have a personal interest or (2) have publicly personally expressed a political opinion.”

Again, recall that BBG and USAGM Watch had revealed political bias in VOA reporting and social media posts, including online activity by some of VOA’s highest-visibility journalists which violated the VOA Charter.

We have been directed to other examples in some of VOA’s bureaus, and by staff in some VOA language services. BBG and USAGM Watch reporting over at least the last five years is replete with such examples.

Pack’s memo noted that VOA’s own standards and practices stated that journalists “are

expected to remain neutral and objective in all public appearances and public spaces, including social media . . . and try to avoid conduct or activity that would call into question your neutrality and objectivity as well as the neutrality and objectivity of VOA.”

The new guidance recommended that any VOA journalist “reporting on or otherwise working on a story regarding “X” situation” should “avoid publicly voicing your personal opinion about that situation because such activity may call into question your credibility as a journalist and could compromise VOA’s reputation as a reliable and credible news organization.”

Supervisors, Pack added, should enforce a need for reporters to recuse themselves from covering certain issues if they are “personally affected by a potential governmental action”.

It could have been a reference to a VOA language service reporter who questioned a Trump National Security Council official about Michael Pack’s cancellation of J-1 work visas held by some VOA staff members. USAGM did not renew the reporter’s U.S. visa. He asserted that his report from the White House had been “censored” by VOA’s central newsroom.

The memo also addressed the issue of VOA reporters using social media accounts to indicate personal disagreement with government policies, recommending that they recuse themselves “from reporting on the Department and the part of the Administration implicated by the criticism.”

Any VOA journalist “who expresses personal views on political topics in their personal social media creates the potential for a conflict of interest and should consider whether recusal or mitigation is required.”

For example, a VOA journalist who on Facebook “likes” a comment or political cartoon that aggressively attacks or disparages the President must recuse themselves from covering the President.

Of course, this guidance caused enormous controversy and became part of a challenge in the courts to Pack’s management of USAGM – even though it sought to address violations of VOA’s own long-standing standards by the organization’s journalists.

Back to the executive summary. It contains some telling words. Remember the objective of this panel was to do a deep dive into every aspect of VOA’s journalistic operations.

Ultimately they wrote, “one can judge Voice of America’s success or failure by its content. Does the quality meet professional standards? Is it relevant to VOA’s diverse audiences? Is it distinctive? Does it connect with audiences in the most apt formats, from digital news and social media to podcasts, radio and TV? Finally, does it serve VOA’s mission to tell America’s story abroad and to cover global regions and peoples not otherwise served by uncensored news organizations?”

EXCERPT FROM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Too often the answer to these questions is no. VOA content varies widely in quality and relevance but is often routine, mediocre and late. It frequently lacks the context, sourcing, sophistication and production values today’s audiences demand. Investigative stories, data journalism, long form narrative and in depth video storytelling are largely absent.”

“VOA continues to be hindered by archaic habits and bereft of some skills and resources needed to achieve excellence. Bureaucratic obstacles are not the biggest problem; VOA needs a radical change in thinking, spirit and organization. Tradition has carved the agency into fiefdoms that impede communication, collaboration and creativity.”

Since she left VOA, with her deputy, just as Michael Pack was arriving at USAGM, Bennett has spent many hours in numerous online Zoom events sponsored by liberal and media think tanks, making a case for excellence of VOA news products.

Specifically, Bennett has claimed that VOA is an impactful investigative reporting force. Interestingly, one of the members of the consultant team ended up at VOA in charge of an investigative reporting unit.

But it’s not like VOA investigative stories have produced consistent banner breaking news headlines. As I and other outside observers have noted, VOA and the greater USAGM have nowhere near the financial, sourcing and reputational capabilities of major news organizations required to be seen as a major force in this area.

As for major restructuring recommended by the consultants, Bennett accelerated a process already underway of enhancing cooperation across stove piped sections of VOA. The report called for a “dramatic break from outdated structures and routines – a revolutionary plan of action, designed from within, to propel the organization into the future.” Between 2016 and 2020, some of VOA’s foreign language services produced multimedia content which included political ads [against Donald Trump](#), in [favor of Hillary Clinton](#), and [in favor of Joe Biden](#).

The full executive summary of the consultants report is provided here for readers. But the message from its conclusions was clear in 2016, and warrants attention – especially from the transition team representing President-elect Joe Biden – as we near 2021.

The headline in 2016 was quite clear: Decades after the end of the Cold War, and many years of attempting to establish itself as a consistent major global media force in the digital age, VOA was still failing in 2016. And not much has changed between 2016 and 2020.

As Amanda Bennett heard in 2016 as she was taking up her position at VOA, it was one thing to want to focus on positives, quite another to be open to seeing and hearing the fullest possible picture of problems at this historically dysfunctional agency.

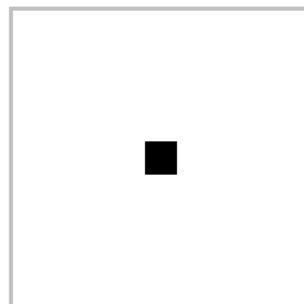
Here's the bigger question: WHERE IS THE FULL REPORT ON WHICH THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY WAS BASED?

It's possible that there was only a paper copy of the full report. But there must be some electronic traces and references to it, and to the executive summary.

Remember, all of this was paid for with taxpayer dimes. If someone deleted electronic agency email traffic pertaining to the original report and/or the summary that would raise a question of potential destruction of government records that could have been subject to FOIA requests.

The full 2016 consultants report is a work product that needs to be seen in its entirety by the public and media. If anybody within the agency retained copies, they need to make these available to the senior management. They should be then released to inquiring media.

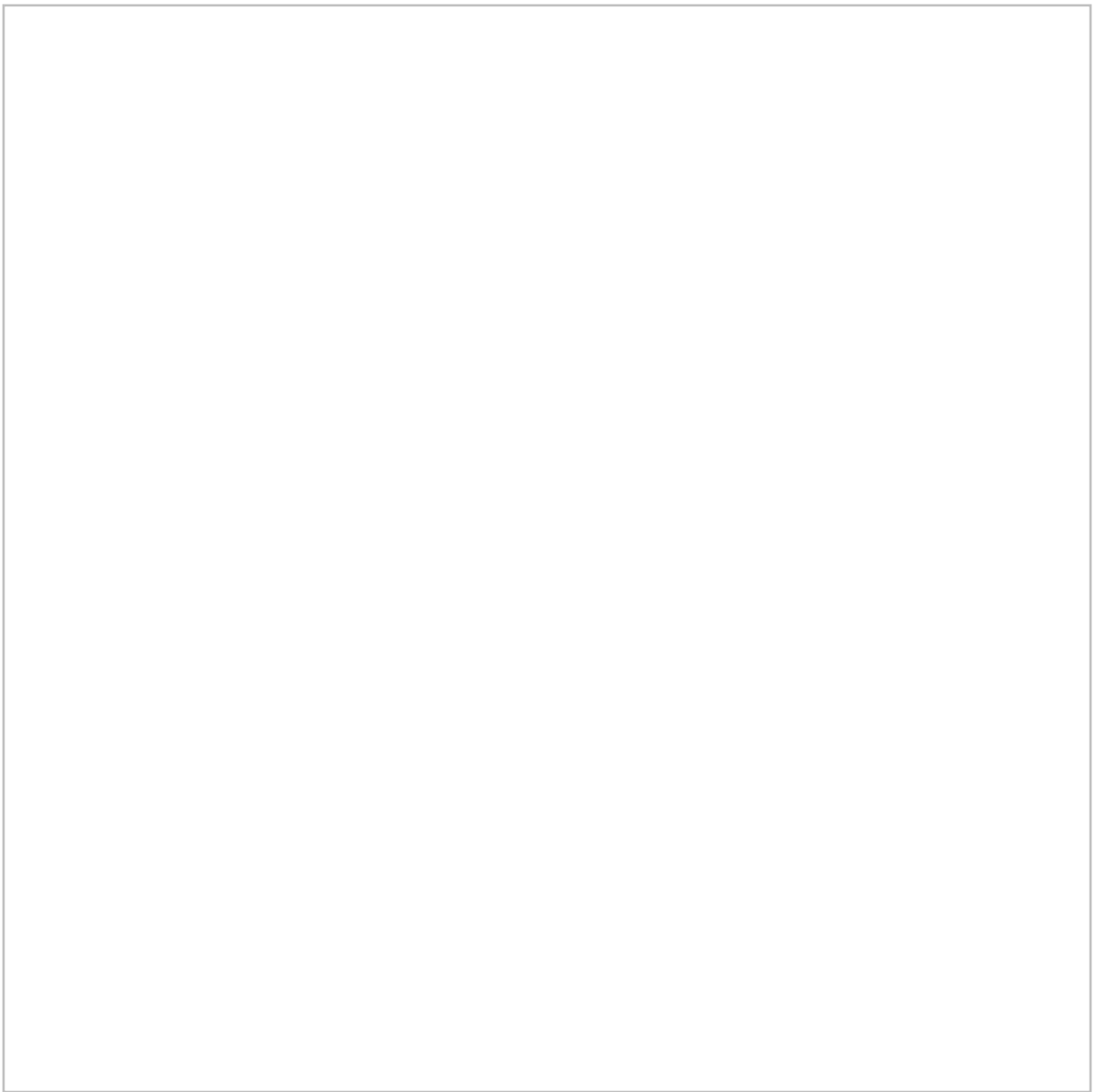
The full report to the former VOA director represents an important document for American taxpayers to see and assess, so they can make their own judgments as to the full extent of the dysfunctions identified. The USAGM Advisory Transition Team appointed by President-Elect Biden also should see and analyze the full report.



DAN ROBINSON

Dan Robinson retired in 2014 after 34 years with the Voice of America. In addition to his assignment as senior White House correspondent from 2010 to 2014, he served as bureau chief in Nairobi, Kenya and Bangkok, Thailand. He was also the chief of the VOA Burmese Service and the Capitol Hill correspondent. Views expressed here are his own.

READ: SIDEBAR: Where 2016 Consultant Report
Recommendations Missed The Mark



Link: <https://bbgwatch.com/bbgwatch/2016-report-confirmed-problem-of-political-bias-at-voice-of-america/>

Link: <https://www.usagmwatch.com/2016-report-confirmed-problem-of-political-bias-at-voice-of-america/>

From: [Michael Lipin](#)
To: [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Persians of Israel series
Date: Thursday, July 23, 2020 1:56:10 PM

Hi Mora,

It was great to meet with you and Jonathan on Tuesday!

As promised, I'll be sending you several emails related to the Persians of Israel, a six-part VOA Persian TV series of 28-minute-long episodes profiling some of the most prominent Persian Israelis who tell the stories of how they achieved success in Israel and how they want to build bridges with other Persians in Iran. I conducted interviews for the series in May to June 2017, mostly in Israel but also here in Washington.

I researched, scripted and narrated the episodes myself and worked with a great team of journalists in the Persian newsroom to complete all of the video production in early 2018. Setareh reviewed the six episodes and expressed her verbal approval of them to me several times, although she told me in early 2018 that she wanted to improve the animated maps that we had produced in-house for some of the episodes by hiring an outside contractor to jazz them up.

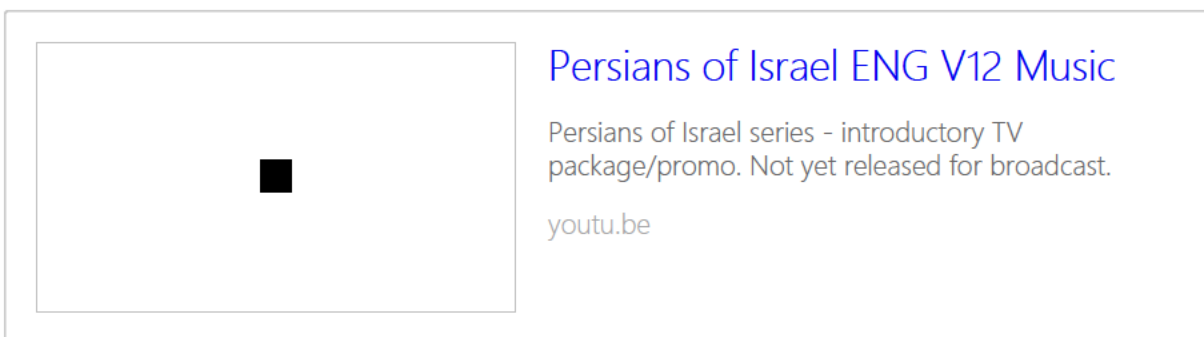
Unfortunately, for the rest of 2018 and first half of 2019, she chose not to air the series for reasons she would not fully explain, besides making a few verbal comments to me about how she was preoccupied by lots of things going on with Iran.

In July 2019, her program manager (b) (6) (who told me back in 2017 that the series was originally his idea) re-started the process of preparing the series for broadcast, by asking me and other staff members to update the final versions of the episodes by including the revised animated maps produced by the outside contractor, fixing the locations of the lower-thirds (name & title graphics) to make room for the VOA365 logo, and making other technical refinements -- a process that we completed the following month, in August. (b) (6) later asked me in October to send him suggestions of people to invite to a Persians of Israel launch event that he was going to organize at an outside venue in DC. After sending him the names, there was no further follow up from him, and the series has continued to gather dust until the present day.

The six-part series features English-language interviews with Israeli pop superstar Rita, former Israeli military chief Dan Halutz, award-winning Israeli author Dori Rabinyan, retired senior Israeli diplomat & former Israeli ambassador to the Vatican Zion Evrony, and veteran Israeli broadcaster Menashe Amir (to whom two episodes are devoted -- one episode about his life & career, and another in which he gives me and the viewers a tour of Yad Vashem and talks

about why it's important to combat Holocaust denial by the Iranian regime). Farsi-dubbed versions of each episode also were created.

Here's a YouTube link to a 5-minute preview package that I put together in early 2018 -- it features me giving a history of Israel's relationship with Iran and then features highlights from my interviews (starting at 3 minutes into the package): https://youtu.be/sq_Qi3AKiAA NB: this is a secret YouTube link, as this content has not been broadcast.



One of the biggest expenses of the project was \$8,360 that we paid to Israeli filmmaking company Leon Films, which provided a two-man camera team that shot my interviews in Israel in May 2017. You can see the record of the payment below. There have been other expenses, such as my travel & accommodation for the May 2017 trip, which cost \$5,228. I'll forward you my approved travel voucher for that trip separately. Just FYI, during my May 2017 trip, I also did several live TV reports from Jerusalem for the daily VOA Persian TV news shows about Trump's visit to Jerusalem, which happened to coincide with my Persians of Israel interviews. But the main purpose of the trip was to shoot video for the series.

Suffice it to say, the overall costs of the series have been even greater in terms of the many weeks and months that VOA Persian staff have devoted to it -- video editors, copy editors, graphic editors, and all the people involved in the massive effort of dubbing six half-hour shows into Farsi. I know I'm not the only one who has been wondering why the series has never aired.

I did not say anything about the series to Amanda Bennett and Sandy Sugawara or anyone else on the 3rd floor of the building because I feared triggering (b) (6)'s wrath if (b) (6) found out that I was going behind (b) (6) back to try to get the series aired. I suspect that if you or someone else in the USAGM team speaks to (b) (6) about the series, (b) (6) will get angry with me because (b) (6) will assume that I told you about it. I also believe that if confronted about why she has held up the series, she will try to make a series of excuses, perhaps even saying that she didn't think the content was good enough (which I know is not true because of the several conversations she had with me in the past few years expressing her approval of the product).

I'd be grateful if you could keep this communication confidential and keep me posted (as

much as you can) about how you intend to proceed with this info. At the very least, it may be useful in providing you with a good example of the waste that has happened in the Persian news department.

Best, Michael

From: Michael Lipin
Sent: Friday, June 23, 2017 1:12 PM
To: LEONFILMS . (b) (6)
Subject: RE: VOA Payment

Hi Yosi,
Just got the hard drive – thanks for sending it!
Shabbat shalom,
Michael

From: LEONFILMS . [mailto:(b) (6)]
Sent: Thursday, June 15, 2017 6:15 AM
To: Michael Lipin (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: VOA Payment

----- Forwarded message -----

From: LEONFILMS . (b) (6)
Date: 2017-06-15 13:15 GMT+03:00
Subject: Re: VOA Payment
To: Steven Autrey (b) (6)

Hi
Payment received by Visa.
Hard Drive sent by EMS courier.

Regards.

Yosi

2017-06-13 18:26 GMT+03:00 (b) (6) >:

Hi Yosi,

Please ask Leah to email us a receipt for the credit card payments.

Thank you,
Steve

(b) (6)

TV Traffic Service

Voice of America
330 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20237
United States
VOANews.com

(b) (6)
- Office
- Direct
- Office Fax

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 10:21

To: 'LEONFILMS .' (b) (6); Michael Lipin (b) (6)

Subject: RE: VOA Payment

Payment in full submitted to (b) (6) at Bandpro.

(b) (6)
TV Traffic Service

Voice of America
330 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20237
United States
VOANews.com

(b) (6)
- Office
- Direct
- Office Fax

From: (b) (6)

Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 10:13

To: 'LEONFILMS .' (b) (6); Michael Lipin (b) (6)

Subject: RE: VOA Payment

We are on the phone with (b) (6) now

(b) (6)
TV Traffic Service

Voice of America
330 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20237
United States
VOANews.com

(b) (6)
- Office
- Direct
- Office Fax

From: LEONFILMS . (b) (6)

Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 06:40

To: (b) (6) Michael Lipin (b) (6)

Subject: Re: VOA Payment

Hi (b) (6)

Not recieved payment yet.

Regards

Yosi

2017-06-07 22:46 GMT+03:00 (b) (6)

Did they send the payment yet? I was told the officer with our Visa card was out until tomorrow morning due to a death in their family.

Steven Autrey

Voice of America TV Traffic

(b) (6)

From: LEONFILMS . (b) (6)

Sent: Wednesday, June 7, 2017 3:45 PM

To: (b) (6)

Subject: Re: VOA Payment

Hi (b) (6)

Can I send you the hard drive?

Regards

Yosi

2017-06-06 16:09 GMT+03:00 LEONFILMS . (b) (6) :

Sure. I will pay for the courier.

Thanks.

2017-06-06 16:07 GMT+03:00 (b) (6)

Hi Yosi,

It was my understanding that you said you would pay for the FedEx shipping of the footage.

There is a US Government account but it will delay payment if we have to amend the purchase orders to included FedEx shipping.

Thank you,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

TV Traffic Service

Voice of America
330 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20237
United States
VOANews.com

(b) (6)

Office
Direct
Office Fax

From: LEONFILMS . (b) (6)

Sent: Monday, June 05, 2017 15:08

To: (b) (6)

Subject: Re: VOA Payment

Thanks (b) (6)

(b) (6), who works at Band Pro is waiting for your call to collect the \$8,360. She is working week days until 17:00 o'clock Israel time (10:00 AM your time!!!).

You can reach (b) (6) at: (b) (6) and tell her it is for me.

Please send me your Fedex account number and address so I can send you the hard drive with the footage. (I have a backup in my studio).

Regards
Yosi

2017-06-05 18:24 GMT+03:00 (b) (6) :

Hi Yosi,

If you can accept a Visa card payment without surcharge as we discussed, please advise the best way to initiate this process. Otherwise we will continue with payment by direct deposit which will take several business days to appear in your account.

Thank you,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

TV Traffic Service

Voice of America
330 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20237
United States

VOANews.com

(b) (6)

Office

Direct

Office Fax

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יוסי ליאון - (b) (6)

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www.leonfilms.co.il

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www.leonfilms.co.il



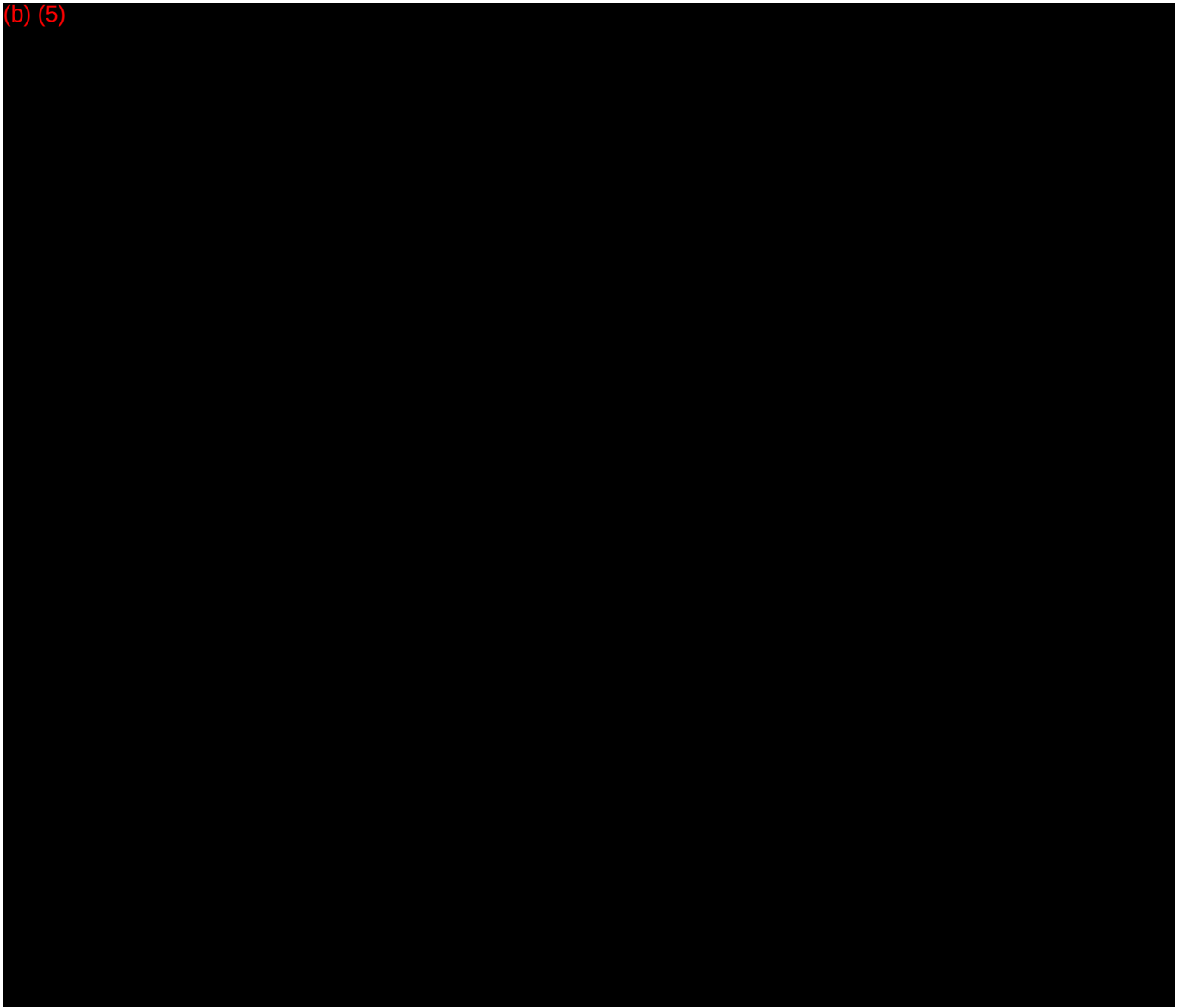
From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Subject: Personnel: (b) (6)
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 9:14:00 AM
Attachments: (b) (6) [_Re.pdf](#)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Toni DeLancey](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); (b) (6)
Subject: possible language for the CEO
Date: Friday, September 4, 2020 6:09:21 PM

Hi Jonathan, Toni, and (b) (6),

It was good meeting with you today. I put together a couple of sentences on a couple of topics that I think would be useful for the CEO to sprinkle in some of his next memos to lift the curtain about what's going on in the agency. I had to guess when wrote them, however, perhaps a reason why the CEO's messaging should deal with those matters.

(b) (5)



Best regards,
John

To: (b) (6)
Subject: Presser and report post
Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 9:05:16 AM
Attachments: [Presser + posting - OPM report.docx](#)
[OPM SuitEA - July 2020.pdf](#)
Importance: High

Good morning, (b) (6).

Please find both below and attached the presser and report post.

- The presser should appear on the front of USAGM.gov as well as in “News”/”Press Releases.”
- The Privacy and Security post should appear under “News”/”Research and Reports.”

Please make sure that the team links “[report](#)” in the presser to the PDF, which is also attached.

Thanks so much!

Sincerely,
JBB

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CEO Pack releases OPM report detailing long-standing USAGM security failures

August 4, 2020

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) CEO Michael Pack has released a [report](#) that reveals severe and systemic security failures at the agency, many of which have persisted for years. This latest report was produced by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management’s (OPM) Suitability Executive Agent Programs, which conducts program reviews of Executive Branch agencies’ personnel suitability and vetting programs.

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<https://www.usagm.gov/our-work/strategy-and-results/strategic-priorities/research-reports/>

Privacy and Security

[Follow-Up Review of the U.S. Agency for Global Media Suitability Program](#)
(PDF, 2.8 M)

A follow-up review of the Agency’s suitability program by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management’s (OPM) Suitability Executive Agent Programs, which conducts program reviews of Executive Branch agencies’ personnel suitability and vetting programs.

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6) [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: Presser: CEO Pack issues statement on USAGM personnel and security policies
Date: Thursday, September 3, 2020 1:34:00 PM
Attachments: [Presser - personnel + security - draft.docx](#)
Importance: High

Hi, (b) (6) .

Please find attached a presser for distribution as soon as possible. It should not go out through email, but only be published in USAGM.gov's press release section and in the blue box.

Let me know if you have stylistic recs or spot typos. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Jonathan

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Public Comments/Emails sent to PubAff mailbox
Date: Thursday, August 20, 2020 10:42:29 AM

Hello Jonathan, forwarding this email for your awareness.

[just a reminder -- **PLS DO NOT CLICK ON LINKS WITHIN EMAIL, per USAGM IT Security guidance.**]

thanks,

(b) (6)

USAGM Public Affairs

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2020 7:25 AM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Subject: SOS - please SAVE me - HELP

Dear Official !

The only solution for my situation is to go via mass media. I don't see any other way out.

You are my only hope,might you help me to continue my living here, I would never forget your kindness. please help me, I don't want to die. please save me !

My name is Leslie (anonym), 31 years old, I am ethnic Uyghur - Chinese minority from Xinjiang.I have been in Russia.Moscow for 7 years,and also graduated from Russian university as journalism.(Bachelor + Master).I Haven't been to homeland 3.5 years, beacuse I am very scared about the chinese communist party government, that they will take me to the "**Concentration Camps**", very dangerous!

I am grateful that all American leaders and pass the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act. I really need US government can give me a chance!

Since the very beginning of 2020, since January I have sent over 950 emails to over 10 countries and organizations for help. I can show you my email send box to prove it if necessary. but I still didn't get any help.

Now I am in Moscow,I really need help,I am unsafe in Russia, Russia has not helped me, I cannot return to China, it is dangerous!

Russia doesn't support and safe Uyghur people.

I am **concerning** about my safety every time! Nobody is defending me.

I've written a lot, sent very many letters to US embassy in Russia asking for help. Their response was that suggest me apply for political asylum in Russia and introduce me a law firm(Civic Assistance Committee) in Moscow.

I had talk with director organization(Civic Assistance Committee)- **Svetlana Gannushkina**.

She said and confirm my information,I cannot get asylum in Russia.I know that there are no chances for justice in this country. There was not any Chinese granted asylum in Russia **history**, Uyghurs are even more impossible. Uyghurs has no chance to be granted asylum in Russia because of Russian government is on Chinese side. there will be no result.

My passport and russian student visa is expiring soon, **my visa expires on August 29. very soon**, Time flies fast.

the US Uyghur Human Right Organization , www.uhrp.org and World Uyghur Congress, I contacted them many times, **BUT not help me**,they help one old man 1 years ago,they asked to States Department for help,and than just 2 day helped a 60 years old man(Uyghur - Chinese minority from Xinjiang) at the airport in Doha. but not help me, I am also Uyghur and also human, **where is humanity this organization?**

I am a high-quality, high-degree person who speaks many languages(polyglot).I'm more helpful and perspective than that one.

Your voice is bigger than my voice!

I hope that you can pass my information to everywhere.

Please,inform about my situation reported by TV news. I just want to live a normal life! Please , Save me!

For personal safety, I can't write all my information. I hope to get good news from you. The only way to ensure my safety in Russia is the US Embassy in Moscow . I am very worried about my parents because they are in China,Xinjiang.

please help me, I don't want to die. please save me !

From: [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
To: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: questions
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 6:04:11 PM
Attachments: [GT Confirm or Deny.docx](#)
[DK confirm or deny.docx](#)
Importance: High

Pre-decisional and deliberative draft communication.

Draft q's Pack asked for.

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Bonnaure, Aaron](#); [DOrazio, Mike](#)
Subject: Re OTF / Epoch Times: US Agency for Global Media Reopens Office of Internet Freedom
Date: Thursday, September 24, 2020 10:31:00 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

EPOCH TIMES

POLITICS

US Agency for Global Media Reopens Office of Internet Freedom

BY [BONNIE EVANS](#)

September 23, 2020 Updated: September 23, 2020

News Analysis

The U.S. Agency for Global Media ([USAGM](#)), which oversees U.S. government broadcasters such as Voice of America and Radio Free Asia, reopened its Office of Internet Freedom (OIF) last month.

OIF, which began operations in 2016, had been closed by leadership prior to the June 4 confirmation of current USAGM Chief Executive Michael Pack.

“There is a critical need to support technologies that allow individuals to securely access and share information online,” the agency said in an [Aug. 18 statement](#).

OIF’s mission is to support the testing, deployment, and management of technologies that circumvent internet blocking, filtering, and other censorship techniques principally used by repressive regimes, such as China and Iran, the agency said in the release.

“Unlike prior USAGM leadership, which sidelined OIF, I consider bolstering internet firewall circumvention to be a top priority,” Pack said. “Blocking access to information is a horrible thing. ... That’s why we’re funding a range of internet firewall circumvention tools.”

With the announcement that OIF is back in business, Pack is moving to reestablish control over USAGM's circumvention efforts, which had been challenged by a previous attempt to establish a shop called the Open Technology Fund (OTF) independent of USAGM control.

At least one issue central to the conflict within USAGM is a debate over whether to use open-source or closed-source technology. As Pack has sought to regain control, the USAGM and a key staff member have come under attack.

Circumventing Censorship

Mechanisms that censor the internet are principally used in authoritarian countries such as China and Iran. Circumventing those mechanisms is a common goal of government agencies and nonprofit organizations that attempt to empower citizens in repressive regimes by opening up access to the internet, but the means for doing so are often hotly debated.

One major point of contention is the use of open-source versus closed-source software (often called "proprietary").

OIF will begin its new existence by funding one of each type. Open-source Psiphon and Cisco's closed-source proprietary ACI are the first beneficiaries of the revived OIF.

In exclusive remarks to The Epoch Times, Katrina Lantos Swett, a noted human rights expert and president of the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice, said that "the Lantos Foundation advocates for all classes of internet freedom tools to be funded, including circumvention tools.

"Freegate and Ultrasurf are both large-scale circumvention tools that have received U.S. government funds in the past, and we would be happy to see

future awards go to field-tested technologies like these that have undergone rigorous security vetting,” she said.

“We also believe all internet freedom technologies that receive funding should be thoroughly evaluated on an ongoing basis, to ensure that funds are being spent on the most effective tools available,” Lantos Swett said.

USAGM also includes under its funding and supervisory umbrella an entity called the Open Technology Fund (OTF). It, like OIF, has been in the business of supporting internet firewall circumnavigation tools.

OTF, however, has been firmly in the camp of using open-source solutions exclusively since its inception as a program within Radio Free Asia (RFA).

Going Rogue

OTF’s adamant exclusion of any internet freedom tools that are closed-source may have been one of the reasons that leadership of the program seemed to go rogue last year.

In September 2019, U.S. records show that Libby Liu, at that time the head of RFA and the OTF program, incorporated Open Technology Fund as a domestic nonprofit corporation under her own name.

Liu is listed as “incorporator” under the “beneficial owners” listing of the corporation’s registration file.

Senior officials at USAGM maintain that Liu had no authorization from either the agency or from any government organization to spin OTF off into its own entity. OTF receives its entire budget from USAGM.

In addition, OTF vacated its affordable office space at USAGM headquarters and moved to an expensive office district in downtown Washington on a taxpayer-funded lease, according to senior officials at USAGM.

In addition, according to officials, OTF didn't leave a forwarding address. Officials at the USAGM say they had to search for the new offices themselves.

When Pack took office just over nine months later, he fired the heads of the USAGM networks and the OTF, including Liu and some board members.

Now, a lawsuit seeks to invalidate those firings, and to unfreeze grant money, which dismissed officials claim is being withheld.

Senior officials at USAGM dispute the lawsuit's claims that Pack didn't have the authority to fire network directors and Liu at OTF. In addition, senior USAGM officials say that money isn't being withheld from the OTF, stating that it is being paid on a revised schedule.

Open-Source Versus Closed-Source Software

Some experts differ with OTF's dogmatic rejection of closed-source circumvention technologies.

CoreDNA, a Australian company that provides a unified cloud platform for digital businesses, according to its website, states that "open source software is available for the general public to use and modify from its original design free of charge."

"What it means is that a piece of software can evolve and be iterated upon by other developers anywhere in the world."

Therefore, CoreDNA's blog on the subject continues, open-source software "should also come with a warning label."

"Whilst an open and peer-to-peer-oriented web is to be applauded philosophically, it can leave us vulnerable to rogue developers who choose to break things for their own benefit. Hence, the need for a warning label."

Closed-source software doesn't need that warning label.

The source code of closed-source software “is not shared with the public for anyone to look at or change,” the company states.

‘Next Frontier of Human Rights’

“Internet freedom is the next frontier of human rights,” Lantos Swett also told The Epoch Times. She’s also a former chair and vice-chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, and teaches human rights and American foreign policy at Tufts University.

She says there are “a few clear goals” that the foundation she leads strives to achieve.

“Open the internet to those in closed societies. Provide funding and tools to empower people to see beyond the censored views of their own totalitarian governments. Give them the freedom to learn, to organize, and to thrive the same way we do in open societies.”

Unlike OTF and its supporters, however, Lantos Swett said that “we are proponents of internet freedom in all its forms.”

“This encompasses both open and closed source technologies.”

The key is to have “a large and flexible toolbox of technologies and approaches” that not only protect a user’s privacy, including those under repressive surveillance, but that also, and critically, “currently circumvent firewalls for millions of users in closed societies.”

It’s funding for those circumvention tools that’s concerned Lantos Swett for years.

“Circumvention tools offer one of the most effective ways to bring down, for

example, the Great Firewall of China,” she said.

“At the very least,” Lantos Swett said, those tools can “punch large holes” into China’s infamous digital barricade.

Despite their effectiveness, however, recent years have seen “a trend of reduced funding,” and in some cases a “complete lack of funding” for large-scale circumvention tools.

“We don’t view funding for internet freedom as an either-or scenario, where we have to fund only open-source or exclusively circumvention tools. But we feel strongly that the latter should receive adequate funding to ensure that there is enough capacity to meet the demand coming from closed societies.”

“We also support the continuing development of new technologies,” she said.

Lantos Swett also weighed in on the controversy between USAGM and its erstwhile spinoff, the OTF.

In The Hill in May, Lantos Swett wrote, “It is folly to think that the 2019 re-establishment of OTF as an independent nonprofit and the sole grantee of the USAGM’s internet freedom funds will lead to any meaningful change.”

“We have been advocating since 2009 to re-direct a portion of the U.S. government’s internet freedom funds” to what is now the USAGM.

Since then, despite potential breakthroughs, “we have equally often been disappointed when we have seen obfuscation, misdirection, and at times even blatant discrimination vis-à-vis decisions about funding.”

Despite “ongoing dialogue” with the former leadership of both USAGM and the OTF that Liu headed, “we have generally witnessed a lack of follow-through in support for some of the most effective circumvention tools currently available.”

“When OTF was re-established as a nonprofit in late 2019 under the same leadership, we had little confidence that we would see meaningful change and this fear was borne out.”

Lantos Swett is “cautiously optimistic”, however, that the changes at USAGM may result in “increased funding for circumvention tools, alongside continued funding for other types of internet freedom tools.”

“We welcome a move in this direction, but given what we have witnessed in the past, we’re going to reserve our judgment until we actually see what action the leadership at USAGM takes.”

“Again, our goal is to open up the internet in closed societies. We look forward to working with anyone who shares this goal, and we’re supportive of pursuing the full range of tools and approaches that hold promise for reaching it,” she said.

Attacks on USAGM

Since the firings, USAGM and one member of Pack’s staff, in particular, have come under attack on social media and in the press.

Mora Namdar, vice-president of legal compliance and risk at USAGM, has been a key focus of disparagement on Twitter.

One Twitter user, Nima Fatemi, [wrote](#):

“This is an absurd intimidation tactic being employed by Michael Pack and his disgrace of ‘acting VP for legal matters’; A new low standard for the US government. Big congrats to Mora Namdar for becoming a sock puppet for the fascists. #saveinternetfreedom”

The “tactic” to which Fatemi refers is likely the unscheduled visit Namdar made to OTF’s new office, once its location had been identified.

Fatemi is described as an “independent security researcher, focused on encryption, privacy and censorship circumvention technologies,” on the website Dxfest.com.

Pack came to Namdar’s defense in a press release and on Twitter.

“The attempts of those with money and power to disparage her are transparent, weak, and without merit. I am lucky to have Ms. Namdar on my team,” Pack wrote.

“The campaign being waged by individuals who seem more concerned about covering up corruption and past failures than working on behalf of the American people should outrage every American citizen. In particular, the personal and false attacks launched against Mora Namdar and other members of my staff working to advance freedom and human rights are totally without merit,” he wrote on Twitter on Aug. 21.

“One can only surmise that OTF’s desire to foment scandal is to distract from its numerous serious lapses and unwillingness to be transparent about its activities.”

Namdar is a lawyer, a daughter of immigrants who fled Iran after the 1979 revolution, and a recognized human rights activist.

Namdar told The Epoch Times that “all of the people who have attacked me have never met me.”

“I’m an ardent supporter of rooting out corruption.”

Namdar has been heartened, though, by some of the responses to social media slurs directed at her.

“On Twitter, people I don’t know have jumped on the bandwagon to defend me.”

Pack, a Trump appointee whose nomination languished in the Senate for more than two years, had already withstood one spate of fierce media criticism earlier in the summer from Democrats and some never-Trump Republicans as a tool-in-waiting of the president who would pursue a policy of selective speech in favor of the administration.

The predictions of interference from the White House into the journalistic process at networks such as Voice of America to date haven't been realized.

In the meantime, on July 1, the Open Technology Fund posted a notice on its website titled "Pause in September Round." The notice went on to say:

"Due to the current lack of clarity around the availability and timeline of the remainder of our FY2020 funds, we have decided to postpone the opening of the upcoming rounds of the Internet Freedom Fund and the Core Infrastructure Fund and will not accept submissions."

It goes on to tell readers, "We are always available for your questions – feel free to contact team members directly or get in touch via hello@opentech.fund."

However, no one replied to a request for comment sent to that email address. In addition, an email sent to the email address for press inquiries that is listed on OTF's website bounced back. No phone number for the organization is listed on the website. The LinkedIn listings for Liu and Laura Cunningham, the principal director of OTF under Liu, don't include a messaging function.

From: [DeLuce, Daniel \(NBCUniversal\)](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] USAGM / J-1 visas
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 7:39:58 PM

Thank you.

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 at 6:50 PM
To: "DeLuce, Daniel (NBCUniversal)" (b) (6)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] USAGM / J-1 visas

Hi, Dan.

Re your J-1-visa inquiry, the following is attributable on background to a "USAGM spokesperson":

USAGM leadership is dedicated to ensuring that the agency has the resources needed to advance its mission and those of its networks and grantees. Given that the agency broadcasts internationally in over 60 languages, it appreciates the value of critical-language skills offered by U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. To improve agency management and protect U.S. national security, it is imperative to determine that hiring authorities and personnel practices are not misused. As such, USAGM is undertaking a comprehensive, case-by-case assessment of personal services contractors (PSCs) who are J-1 visa holders.

Thanks for reaching out.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

From: [DeLuce, Daniel \(NBCUniversal\)](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] USAGM / J-1 visas
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 7:43:01 PM

Thanks again.
Just one more question Jonathan.
How many people does this involve roughly?
Thanks
dan

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 at 6:50 PM
To: "DeLuce, Daniel (NBCUniversal)" (b) (6)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] USAGM / J-1 visas

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Thanks for reaching out.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

From: [DeLuce, Daniel \(NBCUniversal\)](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] USAGM: CEO response to Senator Rubio, et al.
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 3:48:43 PM

Thank you.

I had emailed your office about this last week and never received a response.

I would appreciate it if you could shed any light on the decision on J1 visas for journalists working at VOA's language services.

Best,
dan

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 at 3:23 PM
To: "DeLuce, Daniel (NBCUniversal)" (b) (6)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] USAGM: CEO response to Senator Rubio, et al.

Hi, Dan.

Your article states, "Pack has yet to respond to the letter, congressional staffers said."

CEO Pack's response is attached.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [CEO2016](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: RE: Agency Statements
Date: Monday, January 11, 2021 5:51:00 PM
Attachments: (b) (5)

Attached

From: CEO2016 (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 4:31 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Agency Statements

thanks. Please send word versions too.

Michael Pack
Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Agency for Global Media

(b) (6)

On Jan 11, 2021, at 4:16 PM, Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6) wrote:

Michael,

Please find attached final PDF versions of the [Agency Statements](#).

V/R,

Jonathan

<CONSOLIDATION.pdf><INTERNET-FREEDOM.pdf><J1-VISAS-AND-HIRING-FOREIGN-NATIONALS.pdf><JOURNALISTIC-INDEPENDENCE.pdf><SECURITY-ISSUES.pdf><SPENDING-REVIEW.pdf>

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [CEO2016](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: RE: Agency Statements
Date: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 11:52:00 AM

Will do.

From: CEO2016 (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 11:41 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Agency Statements

Please send again without “draft” on the page and document name. Please use the version now up on our website. Thanks.

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(b) (5)

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [CEO2016](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#); [Kellie Boyle](#)
Subject: RE: Agency Statements
Date: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 1:37:00 PM
Attachments: [CONSOLIDATION.docx](#)
[INTERNET FREEDOM.docx](#)
[J1 VISAS AND HIRING FOREIGN NATIONALS.docx](#)
[JOURNALISTIC INDEPENDENCE.docx](#)
[SECURITY ISSUES.docx](#)
[SPENDING REVIEW.docx](#)

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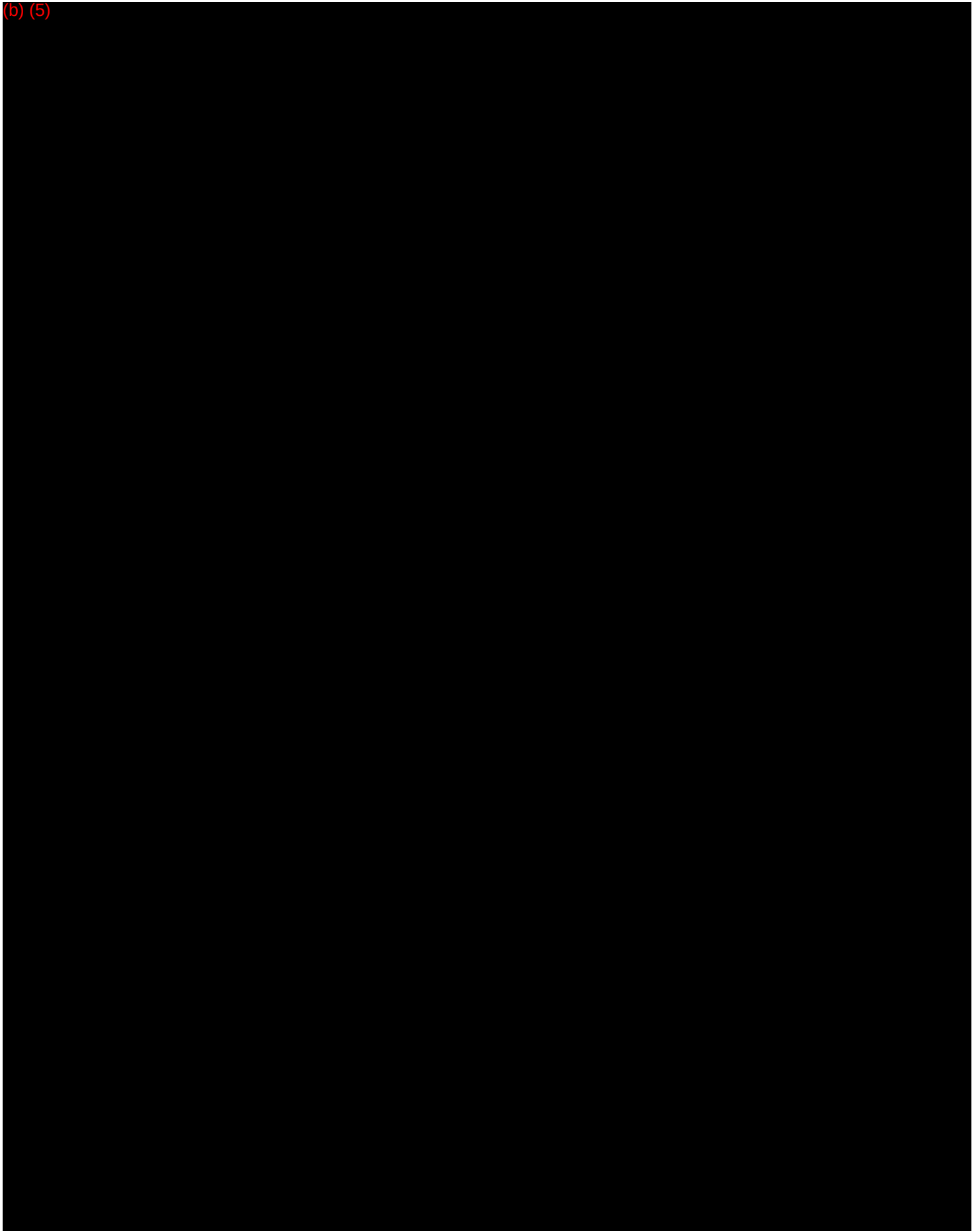
V/R,

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(b) (5)



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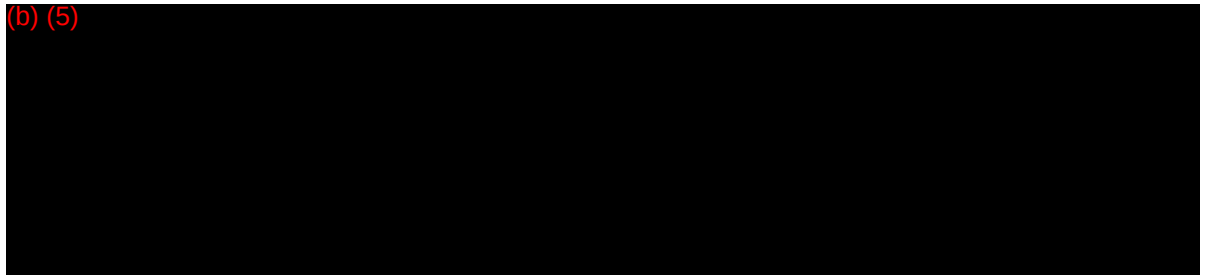
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(b) (5)



From: [CEO2016](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#); [Kellie Boyle](#)
Subject: Re: Agency Statements
Date: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 1:42:36 PM

Thanks

Michael Pack
Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Agency for Global Media

(b) (6)

On Jan 13, 2021, at 1:37 PM, Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6) wrote:

[Attached](#)

From: Jonathan Bronitsky
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 11:52 AM
To: CEO2016 (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Agency Statements

[Will do.](#)

From: CEO2016 (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 11:41 AM
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Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
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REVIEW.docx>

To: [CEO2016](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#); [Kellie Boyle](#)
Subject: RE: Agency Statements
Date: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 1:36:49 PM
Attachments: [CONSOLIDATION.docx](#)

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(b) (5)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Re: Agency Statements
Date: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 1:16:19 PM
Attachments: [CONSOLIDATION.docx](#)
[INTERNET FREEDOM.docx](#)
[J1 VISAS AND HIRING FOREIGN NATIONALS.docx](#)
[JOURNALISTIC INDEPENDENCE.docx](#)
[SECURITY ISSUES.docx](#)
[SPENDING REVIEW.docx](#)

(b) (6)
Acting Director of Public Affairs
United States Agency for Global Media
Washington DC 20237

W: (b) (6)

M: (b) (6)

(b) (6)

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 11:53 AM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Kellie Boyle (b) (6)
Subject: Agency Statements

(b) (6),

Do you have DOCX versions of the USAGM-branded Agency Statements that are online?

V/R,
Jonathan

To: [China Channel LLC - Bonnie Girard](#)
Subject: RE: Article Link & Need Photo / Re: Two Follow-up Questions
Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 2:43:36 PM
Attachments: [CEOPack Headshot HiRes.jpg](#)

From: China Channel LLC - Bonnie Girard (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 12:52 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Article Link & Need Photo / Re: Two Follow-up Questions

Hi Jonathan,

Happy Monday, and I hope all is well with you.

Here is the link to the online version of the article. A 1,700 word version of this will run in Wednesday's national print edition:

https://www.theepochtimes.com/exclusive-michael-pack-discusses-restoring-americas-international-broadcasting_3439883.html

Could you please send me a high-resolution photo of Michael for the print edition article? And if it is over 10 MB, it might be a good idea to copy publisher Stephen Gregory on the email, as well, as my email server doesn't like large files; thanks in advance.

Stephen's email is (b) (4)

Thank you again for giving me the chance to talk with Michael at such length; I hope we can follow up again soon. Please give him my regards.

All the best,

Bonnie

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:24 PM
To: China Channel LLC - Bonnie Girard (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Two Follow-up Questions

Thank you so much for the follow-up, Bonnie. We're looking forward to the article.

From: China Channel LLC - Bonnie Girard (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:43:09 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Two Follow-up Questions

Thank you for all of the additional information, Jonathan, and for your personal attention.

All the best,

Bonnie

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:31 PM
To: China Channel LLC - Bonnie Girard (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Two Follow-up Questions

Also...

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/usagm-reviewing-foreign-journalist-visas>

"VOA and other government agencies routinely scrutinize J-1 visa renewals, which are filed by the employer and submitted to the State Department.... It's unclear how the USAGM process this year differs from past practice."

From: Jonathan Bronitsky
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:06 PM
To: China Channel LLC - Bonnie Girard (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Two Follow-up Questions

<https://www.politico.com/news/2020/07/17/encryption-software-dissidents-368424>

Asked for comment, a USAGM spokesperson said: "No decision to that effect has been made. Both USAGM CEO Michael Pack and OTF Acting CEO James M. Miles are great proponents of internet firewall circumvention. They have every intention of ensuring that these important projects continue to be funded."

<https://time.com/5860163/trump-hong-kong-funding-freeze/>

In a statement to TIME, the USAGM did not dispute the \$2 million figure, but said that it was committed to defending Internet freedom in the region. "USAGM CEO Michael Pack understands the scale and nature of the threat posed by opponents of freedom of expression, and that is precisely why he considers bolstering [Chinese] firewall circumvention a top priority of his tenure at the agency," a spokesperson said.

From: China Channel LLC - Bonnie Girard (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:22 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Two Follow-up Questions

Hi Jonathan,

We are getting ready to publish the article, but before we put it up (and then put it in next week's national print edition), I'd like to get Michael's input on one issue that I didn't raise during the interview, and one that I did raise but on which I would like clarification.

First, you may remember that Michael talked about the heroes of the language services, those who face, and whose families face, intimidation, harassment, and even worse in their home countries. Of course, what has just happened to (b) (6) in Iran is a prime - and tragic - example of that.

Critics of Michael, however, may point to the 100 journalists whose visas are not being renewed and say that if he feels such journalists are heroes, then why are they being put into a position where they will likely face a nasty and dangerous homecoming? Below please find the Washington Post article on that subject. I would greatly appreciate Michael's response to the criticism that he is potentially exposing USAGM journalists to mistreatment in their home countries, as I have written a section on his comments about the international journalists being heroes, and I want him to have the chance to answer critics who might challenge that position.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/media/voice-of-america-faces-loss-of-international-journalists-as-new-overseer-lets-visas-expire/2020/07/09/42f09844-c192-11ea-b4f6-cb39cd8940fb_story.html

Second, you may remember that we had a discussion on Internet firewall circumnavigation tools. Most of that conversation was off the record. I would like to know what I can say in that regard. Reports say that the money that has been put into those tools - \$100 million over nearly a decade (according to RealClearPolitics, https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2020/06/26/as_critics_rage_pack_aims_to_pierce_chinas_info_firewall_143556.html) - has been ineffective, especially in China.

Can Michael comment for the record on what his approach will now be? I want to make sure that I clearly separate what he authorized to be on the record from what we discussed that was off the record.

For your reference, here are links to some information I found on both circumnavigation tools, as well as an interesting blog thread on shortwave in China, which gets somewhat political, on both sides. But there are also objective points which you may find interesting:

1) Circumvention Tools: https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/Archived_Special_Report_FH_Censorship_Circumvention_tools.pdf

2) Shortwave in China: <https://mountainrunner.us/2019/08/shortwave/>

Thank you very much in advance for your help, Jonathan! And please thank Michael again for me, as well. He was a pleasure to interview, and I hope that we may all stay in touch.

Kind regards.

Bonnie

Bonnie Girard

F

(b) (6)

U.S. Mobile: (u) (u)

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Articles FYI
Date: Monday, August 24, 2020 9:46:00 AM

Good morning, (b) (6).

Would you kindly aim to keep the most USAGM-network focused articles at the top? Also, I believe Chris Farrell's op-ed should have appeared further up, since its content was pertinent and *Daily Caller* is better known to this listserv than *UrduPoint*.

And we haven't been consistent in terms of blurbs. Sometimes they're there, and sometimes they're not. Moving forward, let's leave them out, including just the hyperlinked title, outlet name, date, and byline.

Thanks so much!

Sincerely,
Jonathan

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 9:24 AM
To: USAGM Media Clips (b) (6)
Subject: Articles FYI

[The man making waves at America's broadcasting agency](#)

In a rare interview, Michael Pack addresses the litany of criticism he has faced since assuming office in June

Jewish Insider
August 24, 2020
Marc Rod

[Some VOA journalists forced to leave US soon as visas expire](#)

Associated Press
August 21, 2020
Matthew Lee

[House Foreign Affairs chair: US media agency chief 'has much to answer for'](#)

The Hill
August 21, 2020
Rafael Bernal

[US Lawmaker Demands Answers On VOA Journalists' Expiring Visas](#)

UrduPoint

Sat 22nd August 2020 | 01:20 AM

Muhammad Irfan

[Bannon joins the long list of people Trump pretends to barely know](#)

After Steve Bannon's indictment, Trump didn't literally say, "Steve, who?" but he came close.

MSNBC

August 21, 2020

Steve Benen

OPINION

[FARRELL: VOA's Much Needed Shake-Up](#)

Daily Caller

August 21, 2020

Chris Farrell

[Uzbek Reporter Freed, Pending Investigation](#)

Voice of America [via Malaysia Sun]

24 Aug 2020

Abdullaev, 47, has filed stories for the independent regional news site Fergana, Radio Ozodlik, and the London-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting. **Radio Ozodlik is the Uzbek service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty**, a VOA sister outlet run by the U.S. Agency for Global Media.

[Summary of the video chat meeting on Belarus held on 20 August 2020 with recommendations from the off-the-record part](#)

Visegrad Insight

August 24, 2020

Hence, this Visegrad Insight Breakfast discussion aimed at providing a critical map over the situation by speaking with prominent Belarusian experts who are following the situation on the ground.

...

Franak Viacorka, Belarusian journalist, Vice President of the Digital Communication Network and consultant for **U.S. Agency for Global Media**, defined the situation as revolutionary in terms of the usage of digital technologies. In the ...

BBC MONITORING Report

BelaPAN news agency | Minsk | **Reported** 22 Aug 2020 12:49 GMT | **Published** 22 Aug 2020 16:11 GMT

Two Radio Liberty journalists deported from Belarus

TEXT OF REPORT IN ENGLISH BY BELARUSIAN PRIVATELY-OWNED NEWS AGENCY BELAPAN
ON 22 AUGUST

Minsk, 22 August: Two journalists of the Moscow bureau of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Yuliya Vishnevetskaya and Andrei Kiselyov, were arrested in Minsk on Friday afternoon and deported from Belarus for working in the country without accreditation from the foreign ministry.

The journalists spent several hours at a police station and were banned from entering Belarus for five years. They eventually left the country accompanied by a Russian diplomat.

Radio Liberty said that it had officially asked the Belarusian foreign ministry for accreditation for its journalists before their departure for Belarus.

Earlier this month, Belarusian authorities deported three journalists representing Current Time, a Russian-language television channel with the editorial office in Prague, and three journalists of the Russian independent television channel Dozhd (TV Rain), reportedly for working without permit.

SOURCE: BELAPAN NEWS AGENCY, MINSK, IN ENGLISH 1249 GMT 22 AUG 20

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Articles FYI
Date: Monday, August 24, 2020 9:51:00 AM

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 9:48 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Articles FYI

Got it, Jonathan. Will do.

thanks, (b) (6)

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 9:46 AM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Articles FYI

Good morning, (b) (6).

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SOURCE: BELAPAN NEWS AGENCY, MINSK, IN ENGLISH 1249 GMT 22 AUG 20

From: (b) (6)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Re: Articles FYI
Date: Monday, August 24, 2020 9:48:17 AM

Got it, Jonathan. Will do.

thanks, (b) (6)

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 9:46 AM
To: (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Articles FYI

Good morning, (b) (6).

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Earlier this month, Belarusian authorities deported three journalists representing Current Time, a Russian-language television channel with the editorial office in Prague, and three journalists of the Russian independent television channel Dozhd (TV Rain), reportedly for working without permit.

SOURCE: BELAPAN NEWS AGENCY, MINSK, IN ENGLISH 1249 GMT 22 AUG 20

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Hannah Klein](#)
Subject: RE: Bay Fang / RFA
Date: Friday, July 10, 2020 5:14:00 PM

I appreciate it, Hannah, and thanks for the note.

From: Hannah Klein (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 5:12 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Bay Fang / RFA

Hi Jonathan,

Thank you for the email. I have updated the post.

<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2020/07/voa-journalists-visa-renewal.html>

Best,
Hannah

On Fri, Jul 10, 2020 at 1:33 PM Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6) wrote:

Hi, Hannah.

Bay Fang was fired by Parameswaran Ponnudurai, RFA's Acting President, who had been Vice President of Programming at RFA since 2014.

Sincerely,
Jonathan

=====

Pack also dismissed Bay Fang, the former Radio Free Asia chief whom Pack had demoted in June.

<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2020/07/voa-journalists-visa-renewal.html>

From: [Hannah Klein](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Re: Bay Fang / RFA
Date: Friday, July 10, 2020 5:12:00 PM

Hi Jonathan,

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Hannah

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<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2020/07/voa-journalists-visa-renewal.html>

From: [Thad Strom](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Re: Call from Jeff Samuels, Sen. Chris Van Hollan's Office
Date: Friday, November 6, 2020 4:10:55 PM

Yep, been dealing with other MD senator office as well. They want J-1 visa extended for Serbian VOA broadcaster who is worried to travel in COVID environment. I referred Cardin ofc to State Department as they administer 300000 J-1 visa cultural exchange program and have resources online for COVID related issues. Will do same with Van Holden's staffer.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, November 6, 2020 3:37:43 PM
To: Thad Strom (b) (6)
Subject: FW: Call from Jeff Samuels, Sen. Chris Van Hollan's Office

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, November 6, 2020 11:44 AM
To: Diane Cullo (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6); Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6);
Madeleine Hubbard (b) (6)
Subject: Call from Jeff Samuels, Sen. Chris Van Hollan's Office

Hello Diane, forwarding this voicemail from Jeff Samuels, Sen. Chris Van Hollan's office. He's trying to reach someone in USAGM's Congressional Affairs office.

He can be reached on his cell at (b) (6)

thanks,

(b) (6)

USAGM Public Affairs

From: Anonymous
Sent: Friday, November 6, 2020 11:21 AM
To: USAGMOPA (b) (6)
Subject: Shared Voicemail (Public Affairs)

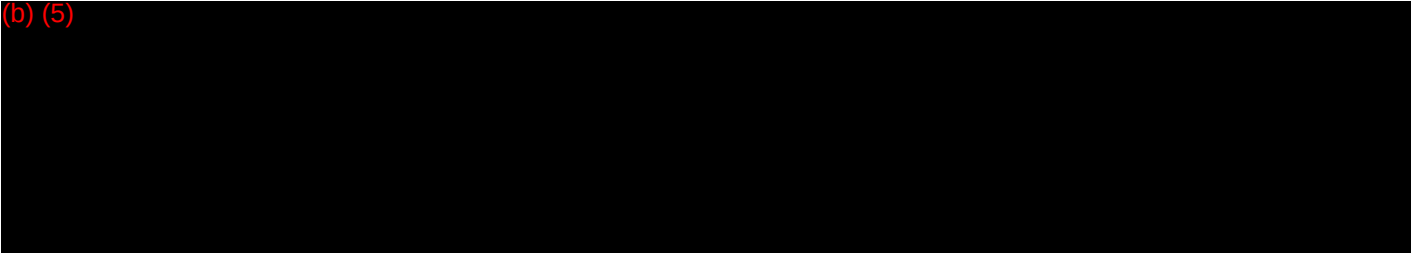
Hi, this is Jeff Samuels calling from Senator Chris Van Holland's office of Maryland. I'm trying to reach someone in the Congressional Affairs Unit. Perhaps public affairs will do the trick. My number is area code. This is my cell phone (b) (6). It is currently. thursday no friday november six at approximately eleven twenty in the morning again that's jeff samuels with senator chris van holland 's office my number is area code (b) (6) thank you

You received a voice mail from [anonymous](#).

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Thad Strom](#)
Cc: [Sam Dewey](#)
Subject: RE: CEO doc
Date: Friday, October 9, 2020 10:30:00 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[CEO - responsibilities - draft.docx](#)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

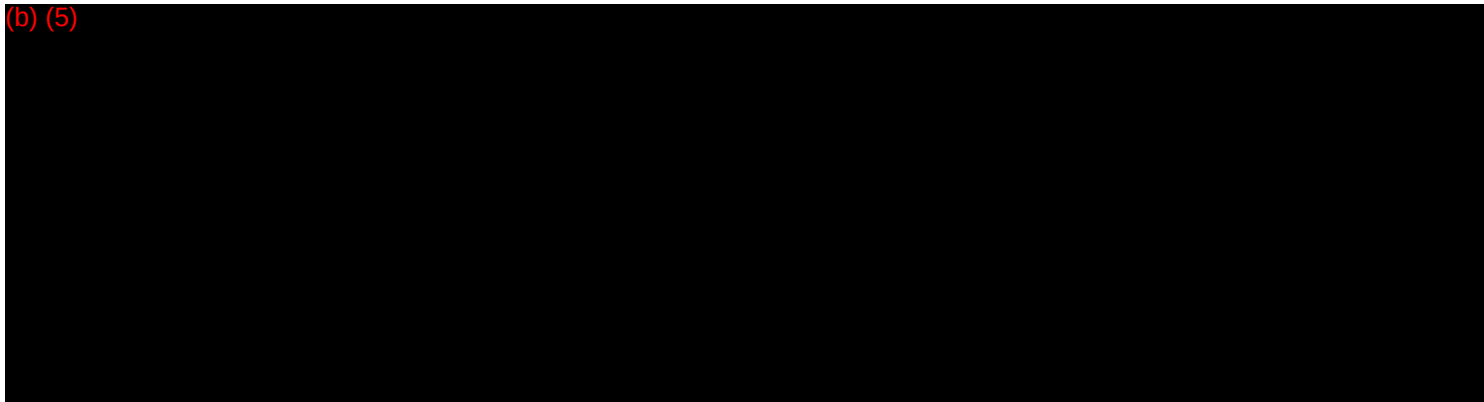
(b) (5)



V/R,
Jonathan

=====

(b) (5)



From: Thad Strom (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, October 8, 2020 5:11 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: CEO doc

Draft and pre-decisional

JB, work your magic. Thanks,

Thad Strom
Senior Advisor
U.S. Agency for Global Media

w) (b) (6)

c) (b) (6)



From: [Toni DeLancey](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: Re: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Monday, November 30, 2020 10:12:31 PM

Jonathan these are so good and I really appreciate all you have done to help meet Michael's comms goals.

I know it really means a lot to him and I am very appreciative!

Thank you,

Toni DeLancey, Ph.D.

Senior Advisor

Office of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Office: (b) (6) | Mobile: 202. (b) (6) | Email: (b) (6)

U.S. Agency for Global Media

[330 Independence Ave. SW | Washington, DC 20237](#)

<http://usagm.gov>

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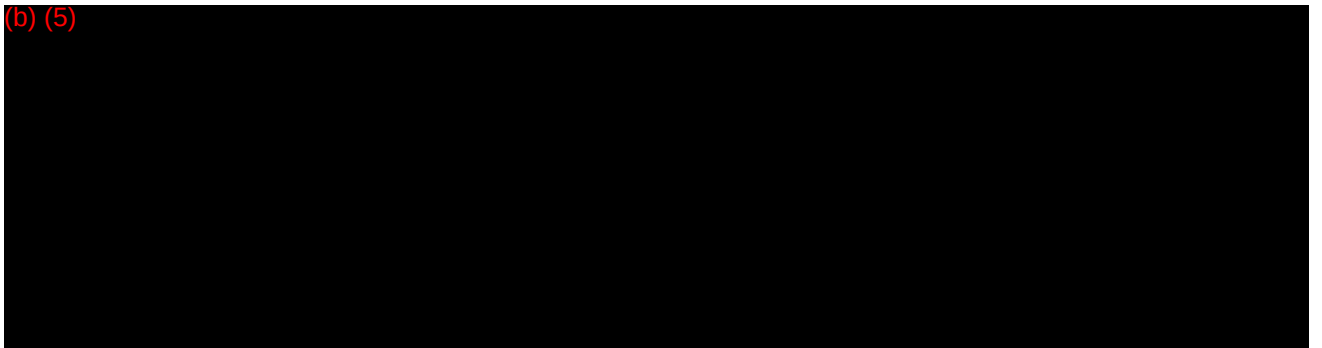
On Nov 30, 2020, at 6:17 PM, Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6) wrote:

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-

Frank and John,

(b) (5)



Thank you so much.

V/R,

Jonathan

<CEO memo - freeze on new spending - draft.docx>

<CEO memo - J-1 visas and the hiring of foreign nationals - draft.docx>

<CEO memo - journalistic independence - draft.docx>

<CEO memo - security issues - draft.docx>

To: [Frank Wuco](#); [John Jagers](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#); (b) (6)
Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 11:57:34 AM

From: Frank Wuco (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 11:54 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); John Jagers (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)

Fire TWO TORPEDO!

From: Frank Wuco
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 11:39 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); John Jagers (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)

JB,

Shooting these back at you as I get through them. Keep (b) (6) in loop so that she can track progress and package for MP.

Thanks,

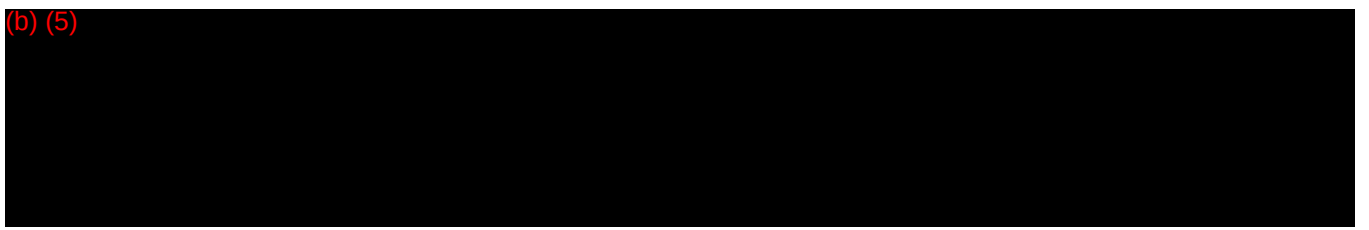
Frank

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, November 30, 2020 6:17 PM
To: Frank Wuco (b) (6); John Jagers (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)

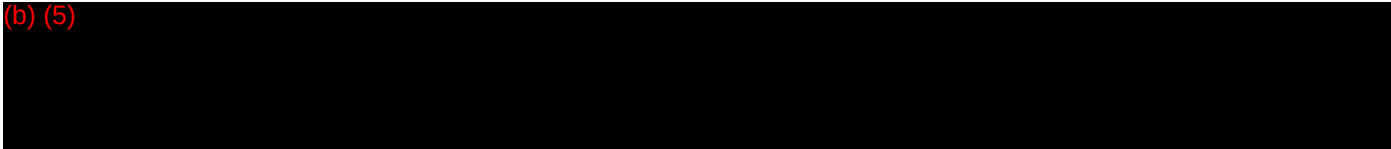
PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-
Frank and John,

(b) (5)



(b) (5)



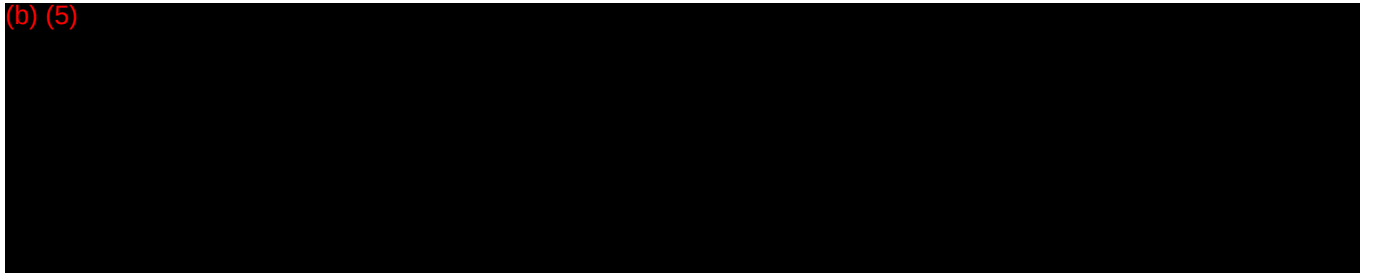
Thank you so much.

V/R,
Jonathan

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6); [Frank Wuco](#); [John Jaggers](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 11:59:00 AM

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

(b) (5)



From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 11:57 AM
To: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); John Jaggers (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)

Who does this go to next for clearance?

From: Frank Wuco (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 11:54
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); John Jaggers (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)

Fire TWO TORPEDO!

From: Frank Wuco
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 11:39 AM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); John Jaggers (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)

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Thanks,

Frank

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)

Sent: Monday, November 30, 2020 6:17 PM

To: Frank Wuco (b) (6); John Jagers (b) (6)

Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)

Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-

Frank and John,

(b) (5)



Thank you so much.

V/R,

Jonathan

From: [Frank Wuco](#)
To: (b) (6); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); [John Jagers](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 1:08:44 PM

I have no input on the "Journalistic Independence" memo, except that I would depersonalize it a bit, if possible. Technically, very good.

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 1:04 PM
To: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); John Jagers (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)

Standing by.

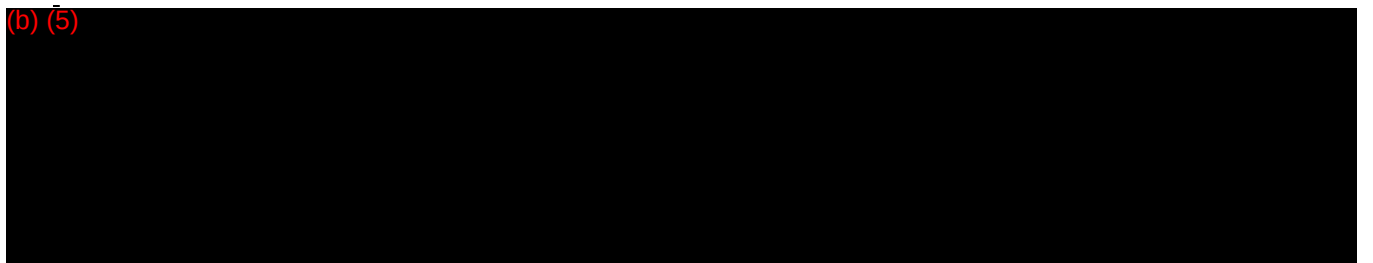
From: Frank Wuco (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 12:03
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); John Jagers (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)

JB, looks like our emails passed like ships (and, fast ones at that!) in the night. All good.

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 11:59 AM
To: (b) (6); Frank Wuco (b) (6); John Jagers (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

(b) (5)



From: (b) (6)

Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 11:57 AM

To: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); John Jagers (b) (6)

Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)

Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)

Who does this go to next for clearance?

From: Frank Wuco (b) (6)

Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 11:54

To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); John Jagers (b) (6)

Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)

Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)

Fire TWO TORPEDO!

From: Frank Wuco

Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 11:39 AM

To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); John Jagers (b) (6)

Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)

Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)

JB,

Shooting these back at you as I get through them. Keep (b) (6) in loop so that she can track progress and package for MP.

Thanks,

Frank

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)

Sent: Monday, November 30, 2020 6:17 PM

To: Frank Wuco (b) (6); John Jagers (b) (6)

Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)

Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)

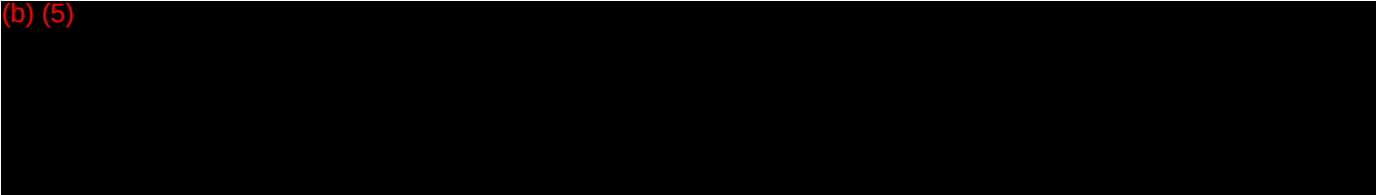
PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-

Frank and John,

(b) (5)

(b) (5)



Thank you so much.

V/R,
Jonathan

From: [CEO2016](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: Re: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 5:43:36 PM

These are excellent! They make a good case for all our major actions.

Given that budget including “consolidation”—2022—is dead in the water. We will need a memo on that too. Thom Layou is doing a bigger report, so you could use it.

The only major issue is that the “freeze memo” overlaps the “j1” memo. Let’s find a solution. Maybe focus only on the contracting and spending freeze.

Best,
Michael Pack
Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Agency for Global Media

(b) (6)

On Dec 1, 2020, at 5:52 PM, Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6) wrote:

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-
Michael,

I haven’t yet received feedback from either Frank or John. But per your request, I’m passing along the initial drafts of the four memos.

V/R,

Jonathan

<CEO memo - freeze on new spending - draft.docx><CEO memo - J-1 visas and the hiring of foreign nationals - draft.docx><CEO memo - journalistic independence - draft.docx><CEO memo - security issues - draft.docx>

To: [Sam Dewey](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Sunday, December 6, 2020 5:31:09 PM
Attachments: [CEO memo - spending review - draft.docx](#)

From: Jonathan Bronitsky

Sent: Thursday, December 3, 2020 11:27 AM

To: Sam Dewey (b) (6); Morvared Namdarkhan (b) (6)

Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)

Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-

Sam and Mora,

(b) (5)



Thank you.

V/R,
Jonathan

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Sam Dewey](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Sunday, December 6, 2020 5:33:00 PM
Attachments: [CEO memo - spending review - draft.docx](#)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-
Sam and Mora,

(b) (5)



Thank you.

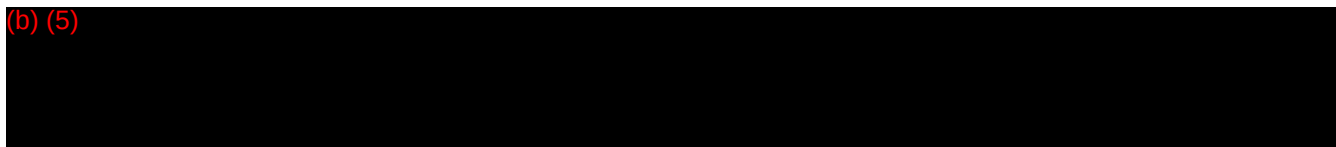
V/R,
Jonathan

From: Jonathan Bronitsky
Sent: Thursday, December 3, 2020 11:27 AM
To: Sam Dewey (b) (6); Morvared Namdarkhan (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-
Sam and Mora,

(b) (5)



Thank you.

V/R,
Jonathan

From: [John Jagers](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#); (b) (6); [Frank Wuco](#)
Cc: [Toni DeLancey](#)
Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)
Date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 2:04:47 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)

Yes & Working it now...

Warm Regards,
John E. Jagers

(b) (6)



From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 11:59 AM
To: (b) (6); Frank Wuco (b) (6); John Jagers
(b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-

(b) (5)

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 11:57 AM
To: Frank Wuco (b) (6); Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); John Jagers
(b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)

Who does this go to next for clearance?

From: Frank Wuco (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 11:54
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); John Jagers (b) (6)
Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)

Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)

Fire TWO TORPEDO!

From: Frank Wuco

Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 11:39 AM

To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6); John Jagers (b) (6)

Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)

Subject: RE: CEO: memos (drafts)

JB,

Shooting these back at you as I get through them. Keep (b) (6) in loop so that she can track progress and package for MP.

Thanks,

Frank

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)

Sent: Monday, November 30, 2020 6:17 PM

To: Frank Wuco (b) (6); John Jagers (b) (6)

Cc: Toni DeLancey (b) (6)

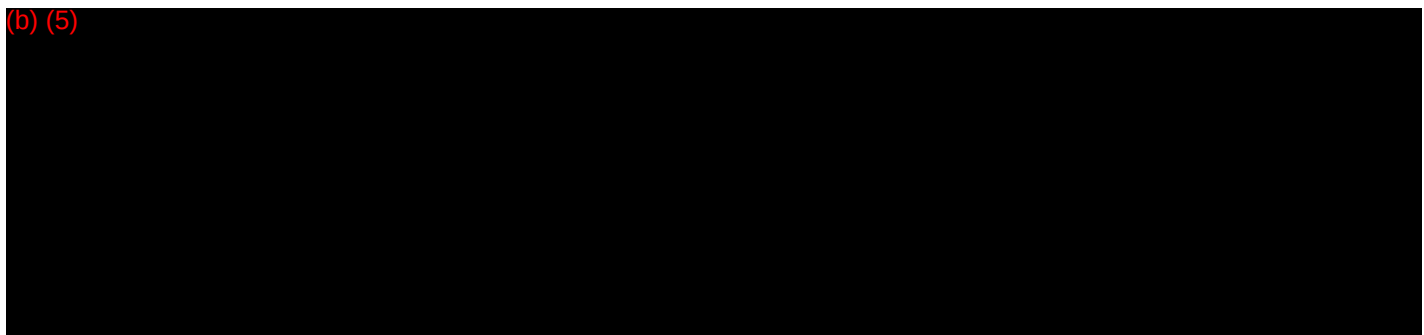
Subject: CEO: memos (drafts)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

-

Frank and John,

(b) (5)



Thank you so much.

V/R,

Jonathan

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: [Sam Dewey](#)
Cc: [Thad Strom](#); [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Diane Cullo](#)
Subject: RE: COI Directive v.3
Date: Friday, October 2, 2020 6:01:00 PM
Attachments: [COI Directive v.4.docx](#)

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

(b) (5) [REDACTED].

From: Thad Strom (b) (6) [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 2, 2020 5:30 PM
To: Sam Dewey (b) (6) [REDACTED]; Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6) [REDACTED];
Frank Wuco (b) (6) [REDACTED]; Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6) [REDACTED]; Diane Cullo
(b) (6) [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: COI Directive v.3

Looks good. Except in the first bullet point, 2nd line, "that that" should read "that". And in 3rd bullet point, penultimate line, do you want to keep the word "must" or would "should" better serve your intent?

Thad Strom

Senior Advisor

U.S. Agency for Global Media

w) (b) (6) [REDACTED]
c) [REDACTED]

<< OLE Object: Picture (Device Independent Bitmap) >>

From: Sam Dewey (b) (6) [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 2, 2020 5:20 PM
To: Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6) [REDACTED]; Frank Wuco (b) (6) [REDACTED];
Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6) [REDACTED]; Thad Strom (b) (6) [REDACTED]; Diane Cullo
(b) (6) [REDACTED]
Subject: COI Directive v.3

Please let me know if you have any edits ASAP.

Best,

Sam

<< File: COI Directive v.3.docx >>

From: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
To: (b) (6)
Cc:
Subject: RE: Concern that visa review could force dozens of Voice of America journalists to leave the United States
Date: Thursday, July 16, 2020 2:43:00 PM

(b) (6), thanks for flagging this.

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 2:42 PM
To: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Fw: Concern that visa review could force dozens of Voice of America journalists to leave the United States

Hi Jonathan, FYI, Mr. Pack is cc'd on this.

thx, (b) (6)

From: Robert Rutkowski (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 2:32:05 PM
To: Public Affairs (b) (6); Michael Pack (b) (6); Keith Abouchar (b) (6); [Elizabeth Strimer](#) (b) (6); <[Elizabeth Strimer](#) (b) (6)> (b) (6); Dan (b) (6); George (b) (6)

Subject: Concern that visa review could force dozens of Voice of America journalists to leave the United States

Michael Pack, CEO
US Agency for Global Media's (USAGM)
330 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20037
Tel: (b) (6)
Email: (b) (6)

Re: Concern that visa review could force dozens of Voice of America journalists to leave the United States

Dear Mr Pack:

Alarm is expressed by the US Agency for Global Media's (USAGM) recent announcement that it will be doing a case-by-case assessment of at least 76 Voice of America journalists' J-1 visa renewal applications, meaning they may be forced to leave the United States when their visas expire.

A spokesperson for USAGM announced on July 9 that the agency is

assessing renewal applications for J-1 visas at Voice of America (VOA), one of the broadcasters overseen by USAGM. You allegedly signalled that you would not approve visa extensions. Sixty-two contractors and 14 full-time VOA employees currently working in the United States on J-1 visas are at risk of being forced to return to their home countries, where some could face retaliation due to their reporting. An unknown number of foreign journalists at USAGM's other media entities are affected by this decision as well.

Foreign journalists are crucial to the mission of USAGM's media outlets, which is to produce news in dozens of languages so citizens in nations without independent media can access reliable reporting. Failing to extend the visas these journalists rely on to work in the United States only empowers governments that restrict freedom of information, and more critically, it could endanger the safety of journalists who have been working for USAGM media outlets when they return to their home nations. USAGM should quickly reverse course to ensure these journalists can remain in the United States, where they can work safely and help further the agency's mission to inform.

This is not the first decision you have made since being appointed CEO of USAGM that threatens to weaken the agency's media outlets. Just weeks after your confirmation, you abruptly removed the heads of four of the agency's news outlets on June 17 in what was described as the "Wednesday night massacre." At the time, RSF called on USAGM and the new heads of each outlet to respect their independence, as required by the agency's statutory "firewall" protecting USAGM outlets from outside editorial interference.

Yours sincerely,
Robert E. Rutkowski

cc:

Senator Mitch McConnell
Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
[Elizabeth Strime](#) (b) (6)

Representative Kevin McCarthy
Republican Majority Leader
Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(b) (6)

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
Office of the Speaker
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515
(b) (6)

Senator Chuck Schumer
Senate Democratic Leader
Russell Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

(b) (6)

Representative Steny Hoyer
House Majority Leader
Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

P/F: (b) (6)

E-mail: (b) (6)

From: [CEO2016](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: [Diane Cullo](#); [Thad Strom](#)
Subject: Re: DOJ Edits
Date: Sunday, October 25, 2020 11:01:52 PM
Attachments: [Firewall CEO Doc MP 102420.docx](#)

They made it much more repetitive, I used similar language to make parallel points. See my original draft attached. Maybe we can scale back. I'll also look at your edits.

Michael Pack
Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Agency for Global Media

(b) (6)

On Oct 25, 2020, at 10:24 PM, Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6) wrote:

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

Please find suggested track-change edits attached.

(b) (5)

V/R,
Jonathan

From: Diane Cullo (b) (6)
Sent: Sunday, October 25, 2020 8:17 PM
To: CEO2016 (b) (6); Thad Strom (b) (6)
Cc: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Re: DOJ Edits

PRE-DECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE

Thoughts with attached accepted recommendations?

From: CEO2016 (b) (6)
Sent: Sunday, October 25, 2020 7:44 PM
To: Thad Strom (b) (6)

Cc: Diane Cullo (b) (6); Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)

Subject: Re: DOJ Edits

We can send the final pulling the reg document, once I sign it.

Diane, Sam is seeing if we can release it early and embargo it.

Michael Pack
Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Agency for Global Media

(b) (6)

On Oct 25, 2020, at 7:22 PM, Thad Strom (b) (6)
wrote:

Useful for the Hill if I could attach the more legalistic doc used to
rescind

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: CEO2016 (b) (6)
Sent: Sunday, October 25, 2020 7:10:41 PM
To: Diane Cullo (b) (6); Thad Strom
(b) (6); Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: DOJ Edits

Weaker but still useful? What do you think?

Best,
Michael Pack
Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Agency for Global Media

(b) (6)

Begin forwarded message:

From: Sam Dewey (b) (6)
Subject: DOJ Edits
Date: October 25, 2020 at 7:02:40 PM EDT
To: CEO2016 (b) (6)

Cc: Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6),
Morvared Namdarkhan (b) (6)

**PRIVILEGED AND CONFIDENTIAL
ATTORNEY WORK PRODUCT
ATTORNEY-CLIENT
COMMUNICATION
PRE-DECISIONAL/DELIBERATIVE**

Michael:

(b) (5)

Best,

Sam

<Firewall CEO Doc MP 102420 Original + DOJ 6.00 pm 8.14p + edits.docx>

From: [Morvared Namdarkhan](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: RE: Evans (Epoch Times): US Agency for Global Media Reopens Office of Internet Freedom
Date: Thursday, September 24, 2020 12:42:10 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

There are several misstatements and inaccuracies in this article. Not sure why this was done but it needs to be corrected.

From: Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2020 10:31 AM
To: CEO2016 (b) (6); Morvared Namdarkhan (b) (6); Diane Cullo (b) (6); Emily Pauline Newman (b) (6); Thad Strom (b) (6); Frank Wuco (b) (6); Sam Dewey (b) (6); Toni DeLancey (b) (6)
Subject: Evans (Epoch Times): US Agency for Global Media Reopens Office of Internet Freedom

EPOCH TIMES

POLITICS

US Agency for Global Media Reopens Office of Internet Freedom

BY [BONNIE EVANS](#)

September 23, 2020 Updated: September 23, 2020

News Analysis

The U.S. Agency for Global Media ([USAGM](#)), which oversees U.S. government broadcasters such as Voice of America and Radio Free Asia, reopened its Office of Internet Freedom (OIF) last month.

OIF, which began operations in 2016, had been closed by leadership prior to the June 4 confirmation of current USAGM Chief Executive Michael Pack.

“There is a critical need to support technologies that allow individuals to securely access and share information online,” the agency said in an [Aug. 18 statement](#).

OIF's mission is to support the testing, deployment, and management of technologies that circumvent internet blocking, filtering, and other censorship techniques principally used by repressive regimes, such as China and Iran, the agency said in the release.

“Unlike prior USAGM leadership, which sidelined OIF, I consider bolstering internet firewall circumvention to be a top priority,” Pack said. “Blocking access to information is a horrible thing. ... That’s why we’re funding a range of internet firewall circumvention tools.”

With the announcement that OIF is back in business, Pack is moving to reestablish control over USAGM's circumvention efforts, which had been challenged by a previous attempt to establish a shop called the Open Technology Fund (OTF) independent of USAGM control.

At least one issue central to the conflict within USAGM is a debate over whether to use open-source or closed-source technology. As Pack has sought to regain control, the USAGM and a key staff member have come under attack.

Circumventing Censorship

Mechanisms that censor the internet are principally used in authoritarian countries such as China and Iran. Circumventing those mechanisms is a common goal of government agencies and nonprofit organizations that attempt to empower citizens in repressive regimes by opening up access to the internet, but the means for doing so are often hotly debated.

One major point of contention is the use of open-source versus closed-source software (often called “proprietary”).

OIF will begin its new existence by funding one of each type. Open-source Psiphon and Cisco's closed-source proprietary ACI are the first beneficiaries of the revived OIF.

In exclusive remarks to The Epoch Times, Katrina Lantos Swett, a noted human rights expert and president of the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice, said that “the Lantos Foundation advocates for all classes of internet freedom tools to be funded, including circumvention tools.

“Freagate and Ultrasurf are both large-scale circumvention tools that have received U.S. government funds in the past, and we would be happy to see future awards go to field-tested technologies like these that have undergone rigorous security vetting,” she said.

“We also believe all internet freedom technologies that receive funding should be thoroughly evaluated on an ongoing basis, to ensure that funds are being spent on the most effective tools available,” Lantos Swett said.

USAGM also includes under its funding and supervisory umbrella an entity called the Open Technology Fund (OTF). It, like OIF, has been in the business of supporting internet firewall circumnavigation tools.

OTF, however, has been firmly in the camp of using open-source solutions exclusively since its inception as a program within Radio Free Asia (RFA).

Going Rogue

OTF’s adamant exclusion of any internet freedom tools that are closed-source may have been one of the reasons that leadership of the program seemed to go rogue last year.

In September 2019, U.S. records show that Libby Liu, at that time the head of RFA and the OTF program, incorporated Open Technology Fund as a domestic nonprofit corporation under her own name.

Liu is listed as “incorporator” under the “beneficial owners” listing of the corporation’s registration file.

Senior officials at USAGM maintain that Liu had no authorization from either the agency or from any government organization to spin OTF off into its own entity. OTF receives its entire budget from USAGM.

In addition, OTF vacated its affordable office space at USAGM headquarters and moved to an expensive office district in downtown Washington on a taxpayer-funded lease, according to senior officials at USAGM.

In addition, according to officials, OTF didn't leave a forwarding address. Officials at the USAGM say they had to search for the new offices themselves.

When Pack took office just over nine months later, he fired the heads of the USAGM networks and the OTF, including Liu and some board members.

Now, a lawsuit seeks to invalidate those firings, and to unfreeze grant money, which dismissed officials claim is being withheld.

Senior officials at USAGM dispute the lawsuit's claims that Pack didn't have the authority to fire network directors and Liu at OTF. In addition, senior USAGM officials say that money isn't being withheld from the OTF, stating that it is being paid on a revised schedule.

Open-Source Versus Closed-Source Software

Some experts differ with OTF's dogmatic rejection of closed-source circumvention technologies.

CoreDNA, a Australian company that provides a unified cloud platform for digital businesses, according to its website, states that "open source software is available for the general public to use and modify from its original design free of charge."

“What it means is that a piece of software can evolve and be iterated upon by other developers anywhere in the world.”

Therefore, CoreDNA’s blog on the subject continues, open-source software “should also come with a warning label.”

“Whilst an open and peer-to-peer-oriented web is to be applauded philosophically, it can leave us vulnerable to rogue developers who choose to break things for their own benefit. Hence, the need for a warning label.”

Closed-source software doesn’t need that warning label.

The source code of closed-source software “is not shared with the public for anyone to look at or change,” the company states.

‘Next Frontier of Human Rights’

“Internet freedom is the next frontier of human rights,” Lantos Swett also told The Epoch Times. She’s also a former chair and vice-chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, and teaches human rights and American foreign policy at Tufts University.

She says there are “a few clear goals” that the foundation she leads strives to achieve.

“Open the internet to those in closed societies. Provide funding and tools to empower people to see beyond the censored views of their own totalitarian governments. Give them the freedom to learn, to organize, and to thrive the same way we do in open societies.”

Unlike OTF and its supporters, however, Lantos Swett said that “we are proponents of internet freedom in all its forms.”

“This encompasses both open and closed source technologies.”

The key is to have “a large and flexible toolbox of technologies and approaches” that not only protect a user’s privacy, including those under repressive surveillance, but that also, and critically, “currently circumvent firewalls for millions of users in closed societies.”

It’s funding for those circumvention tools that’s concerned Lantos Swett for years.

“Circumvention tools offer one of the most effective ways to bring down, for example, the Great Firewall of China,” she said.

“At the very least,” Lantos Swett said, those tools can “punch large holes” into China’s infamous digital barricade.

Despite their effectiveness, however, recent years have seen “a trend of reduced funding,” and in some cases a “complete lack of funding” for large-scale circumvention tools.

“We don’t view funding for internet freedom as an either-or scenario, where we have to fund only open-source or exclusively circumvention tools. But we feel strongly that the latter should receive adequate funding to ensure that there is enough capacity to meet the demand coming from closed societies.”

“We also support the continuing development of new technologies,” she said.

Lantos Swett also weighed in on the controversy between USAGM and its erstwhile spinoff, the OTF.

In The Hill in May, Lantos Swett wrote, “It is folly to think that the 2019 re-establishment of OTF as an independent nonprofit and the sole grantee of the USAGM’s internet freedom funds will lead to any meaningful change.”

“We have been advocating since 2009 to re-direct a portion of the U.S. government’s internet freedom funds” to what is now the USAGM.

Since then, despite potential breakthroughs, “we have equally often been disappointed when we have seen obfuscation, misdirection, and at times even blatant discrimination vis-à-vis decisions about funding.”

Despite “ongoing dialogue” with the former leadership of both USAGM and the OTF that Liu headed, “we have generally witnessed a lack of follow-through in support for some of the most effective circumvention tools currently available.”

“When OTF was re-established as a nonprofit in late 2019 under the same leadership, we had little confidence that we would see meaningful change and this fear was borne out.”

Lantos Swett is “cautiously optimistic”, however, that the changes at USAGM may result in “increased funding for circumvention tools, alongside continued funding for other types of internet freedom tools.”

“We welcome a move in this direction, but given what we have witnessed in the past, we’re going to reserve our judgment until we actually see what action the leadership at USAGM takes.”

“Again, our goal is to open up the internet in closed societies. We look forward to working with anyone who shares this goal, and we’re supportive of pursuing the full range of tools and approaches that hold promise for reaching it,” she said.

Attacks on USAGM

Since the firings, USAGM and one member of Pack’s staff, in particular, have come under attack on social media and in the press.

Mora Namdar, vice-president of legal compliance and risk at USAGM, has been a key focus of disparagement on Twitter.

One Twitter user, Nima Fatemi, [wrote](#):

“This is an absurd intimidation tactic being employed by Michael Pack and his disgrace of ‘acting VP for legal matters’; A new low standard for the US government. Big congrats to Mora Namdar for becoming a sock puppet for the fascists. #saveinternetfreedom”

The “tactic” to which Fatemi refers is likely the unscheduled visit Namdar made to OTF’s new office, once its location had been identified.

Fatemi is described as an “independent security researcher, focused on encryption, privacy and censorship circumvention technologies,” on the website Dxfest.com.

Pack came to Namdar’s defense in a press release and on Twitter.

“The attempts of those with money and power to disparage her are transparent, weak, and without merit. I am lucky to have Ms. Namdar on my team,” Pack wrote.

“The campaign being waged by individuals who seem more concerned about covering up corruption and past failures than working on behalf of the American people should outrage every American citizen. In particular, the personal and false attacks launched against Mora Namdar and other members of my staff working to advance freedom and human rights are totally without merit,” he wrote on Twitter on Aug. 21.

“One can only surmise that OTF’s desire to foment scandal is to distract from its numerous serious lapses and unwillingness to be transparent about its activities.”

Namdar is a lawyer, a daughter of immigrants who fled Iran after the 1979 revolution, and a recognized human rights activist.

Namdar told The Epoch Times that “all of the people who have attacked me have never met me.”

“I’m an ardent supporter of rooting out corruption.”

Namdar has been heartened, though, by some of the responses to social media slurs directed at her.

“On Twitter, people I don’t know have jumped on the bandwagon to defend me.”

Pack, a Trump appointee whose nomination languished in the Senate for more than two years, had already withstood one spate of fierce media criticism earlier in the summer from Democrats and some never-Trump Republicans as a tool-in-waiting of the president who would pursue a policy of selective speech in favor of the administration.

The predictions of interference from the White House into the journalistic process at networks such as Voice of America to date haven’t been realized.

In the meantime, on July 1, the Open Technology Fund posted a notice on its website titled “Pause in September Round.” The notice went on to say:

“Due to the current lack of clarity around the availability and timeline of the remainder of our FY2020 funds, we have decided to postpone the opening of the upcoming rounds of the Internet Freedom Fund and the Core Infrastructure Fund and will not accept submissions.”

It goes on to tell readers, “We are always available for your questions – feel free to contact team members directly or get in touch via hello@opentech.fund.”

However, no one replied to a request for comment sent to that email address. In addition, an email sent to the email address for press inquiries

that is listed on OTF's website bounced back. No phone number for the organization is listed on the website. The LinkedIn listings for Liu and Laura Cunningham, the principal director of OTF under Liu, don't include a messaging function.

From: [Christopher Bedford](#)
To: [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Cc: [Unknown](#); [M. Z. Hemingway](#)
Subject: Re: Federalist / Gross misquoting of Michael Pack
Date: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 8:30:13 PM

This is ridiculous by them. What jackals. Thanks. I'll take a look.

On Tue, Sep 1, 2020, 7:36 PM Jonathan Bronitsky (b) (6) wrote:

Also, re their claims involving "joking about deporting his own employees":

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From: Jonathan Bronitsky
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 6:56 PM
To: (b) (6); Christopher Bedford (b) (6);
(b) (6)
Subject: Federalist / Gross misquoting of Michael Pack

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USAGM would like to push back against these malicious distortions of Michael's [appearance](#) on *The Federalist Radio Hour*. Either these journalists didn't bother to listen to the podcast, or they simply don't care to accurately relay the exchange and its context to their readers and listeners.

Thanks so much for your time and consideration.

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CB: [INTERJECTION] "Have you considered banning masks and turning off the air conditioning? That's my prescription for federal agencies."

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Chris asked Michael about USAGM’s security situation:

MP: “I have a responsibility to make sure that the security of these agencies is maintained. The fact is that foreign intelligence agencies from the beginning – from the creation of these agencies – have been interested in penetrating them. To be a journalist is a great cover for a spy – famous journalists like Kim Philby who worked for the BBC... It’s just a great cover. And from the beginning of the Cold War, even earlier, they’ve been penetrated. It [the field of journalism] is a great place to put a foreign spy. I have to make sure that doesn’t happen – to stand up for the national security interests of Americans.”

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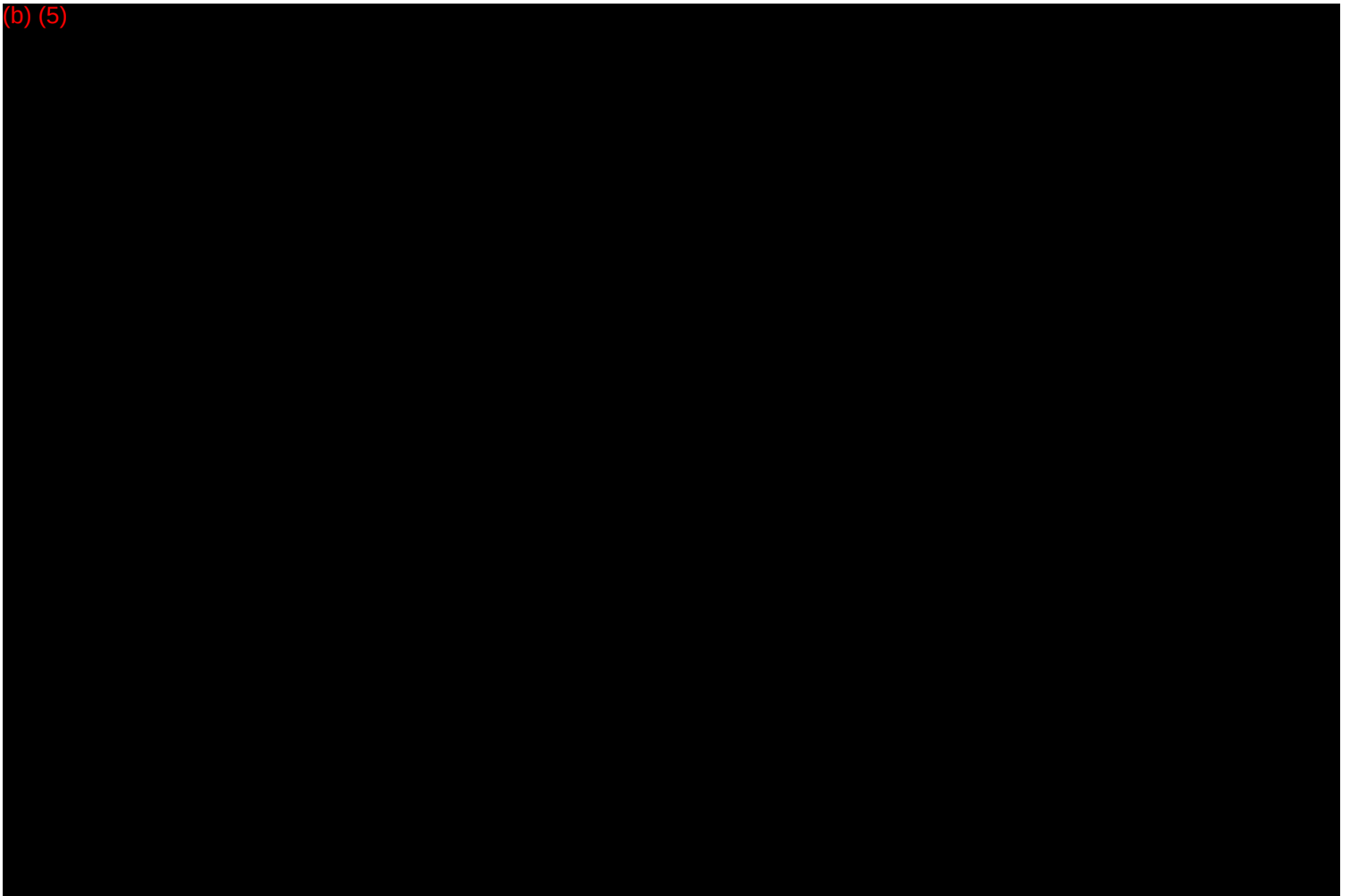
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To: [CEQ2016](#)
Cc: [Emily Pauline Newman](#); [Morvared Namdarkhan](#); [Frank Wuco](#); [Diane Cullo](#); [Thad Strom](#); [Jonathan Bronitsky](#)
Subject: RE: Firewall examples
Date: Friday, October 23, 2020 9:15:27 PM

**PRIVILEGED AND CONFIDENTIAL
ATTORNEY WORK PRODUCT
ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATION
PRE-DECISIONAL/DELIBERATIVE**

Michael:

(b) (5)



Best,

Sam

From: CEO2016 (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2020 8:33 PM
To: Sam Dewey (b) (6)
Subject: Firewall examples

Please send me ASAP the list of four or five examples you cited at our Wednesday meeting of things the Firewall prohibits.

Best,
Michael Pack
Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Agency for Global Media

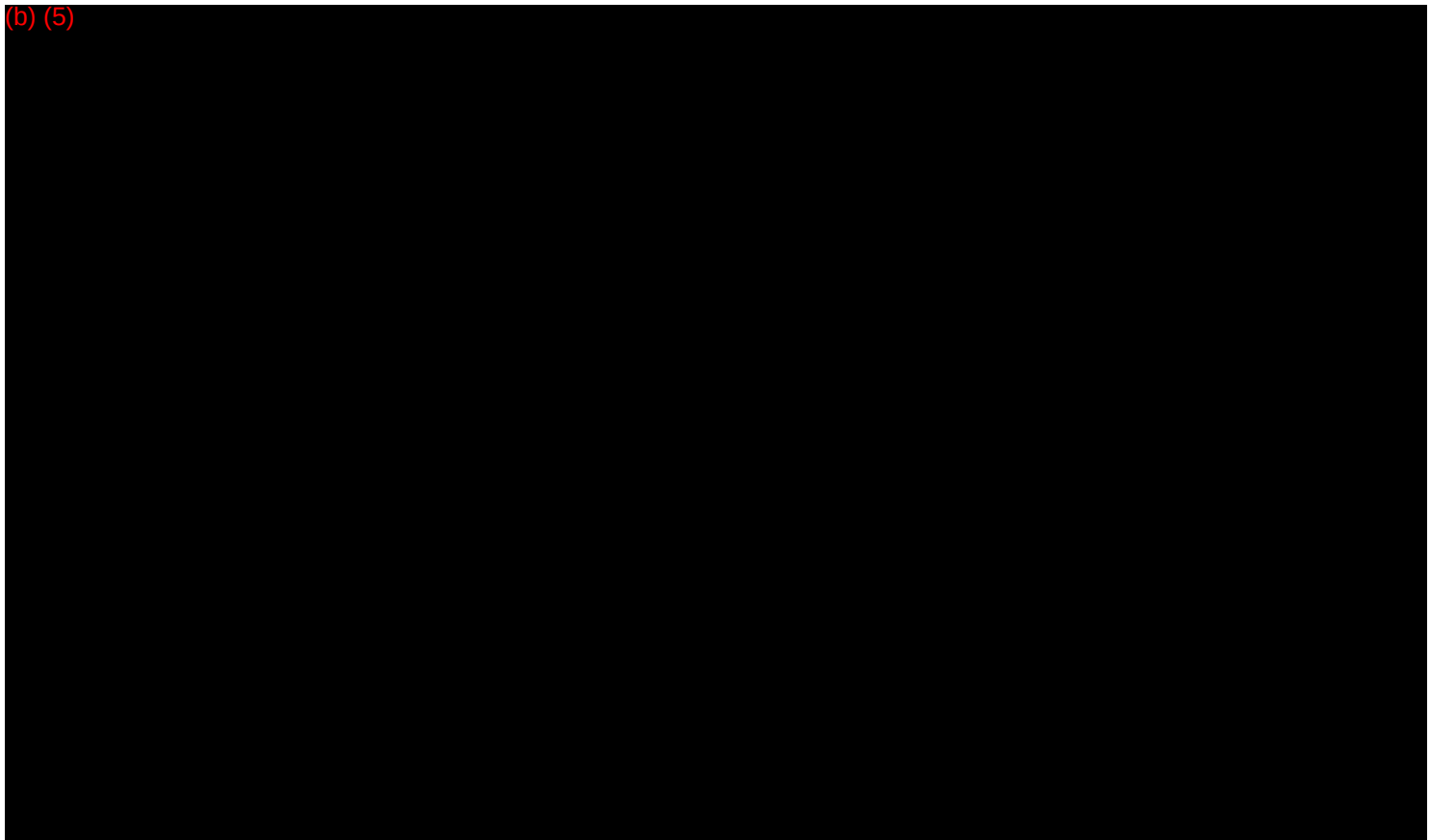
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Subject: RE: Firewall examples
Date: Friday, October 23, 2020 10:09:13 PM

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Michael:

(b) (5)



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From: CEO2016 (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2020 10:00 PM
To: Sam Dewey (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Firewall examples

I meant the examples you cited on Wednesday. I only remember the first: If the President knew a story endangered the lives of soldiers, he could not ask me to get VOA to pull it. There were about five of these.

Best,
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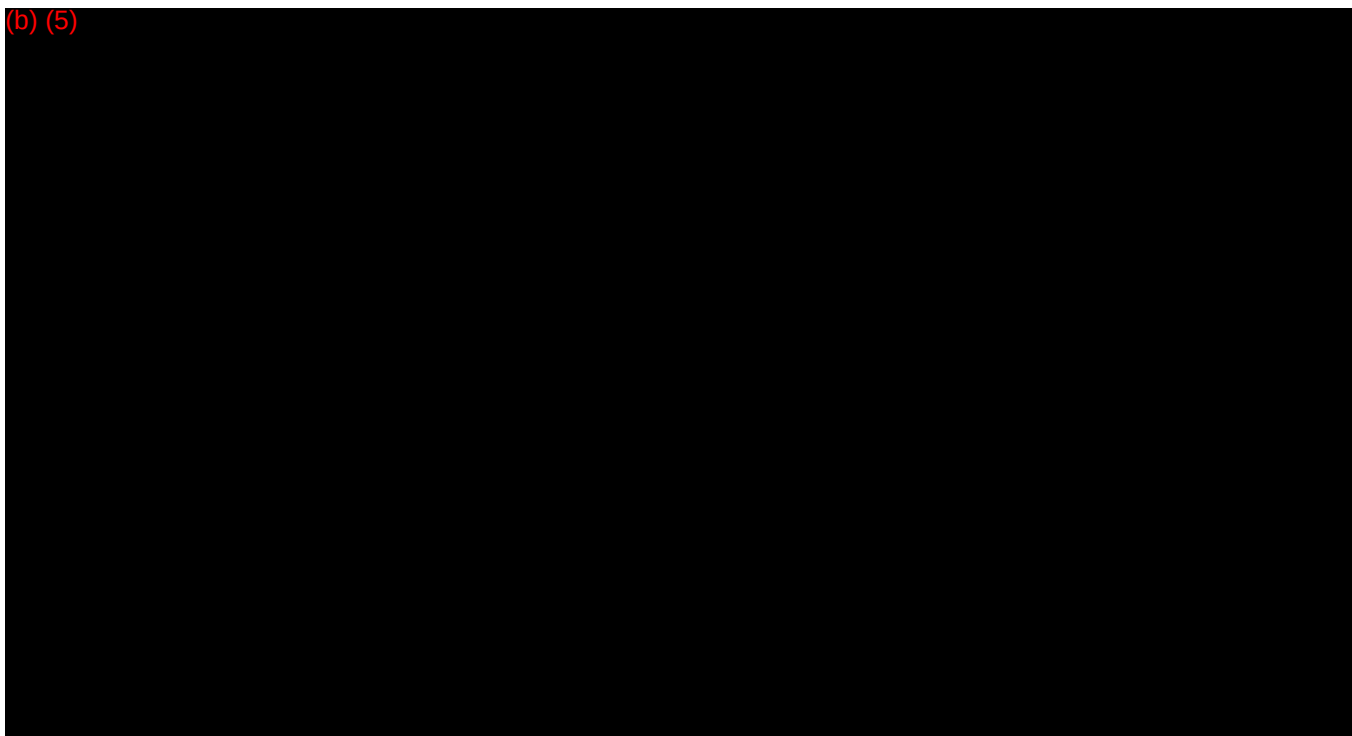
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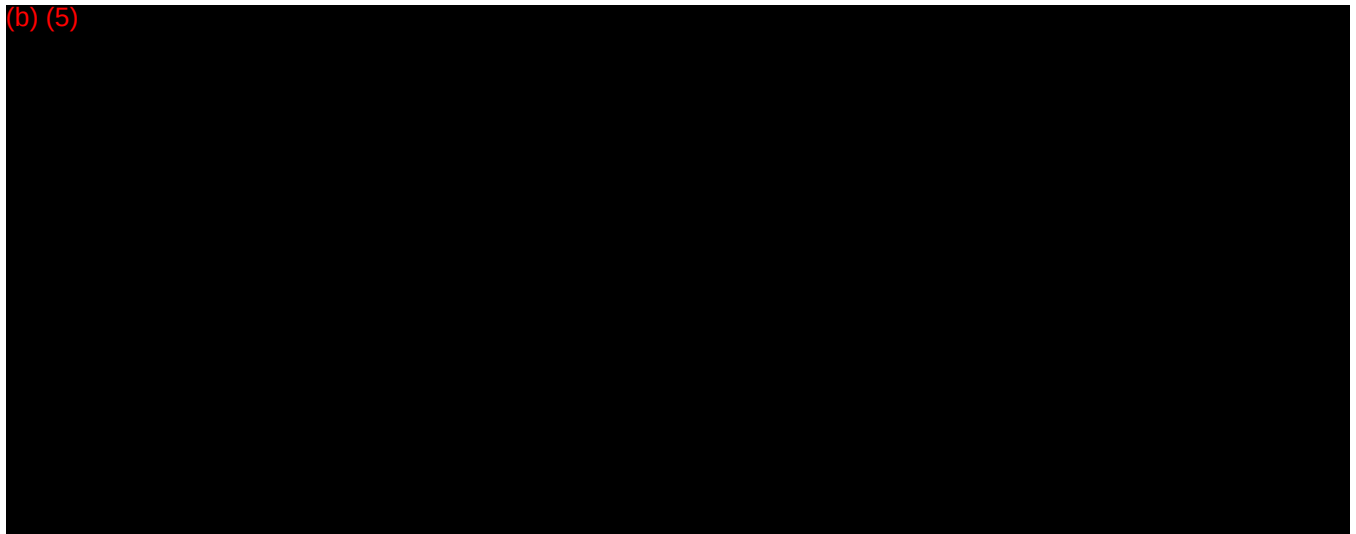
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