



July 1, 2020

The Honorable Michael Pack
Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Agency for Global Media
330 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20237

Dear Mr. Pack:

We write to express our deep concern regarding your recent actions to terminate the heads of the three private grantee networks—Radio Free Asia, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and the Middle East Broadcasting Network—and the Open Technology Fund (OTF). The termination of qualified, expert staff and network heads for no specific reason as well as the removal of their boards raises questions about the preservation of these entities and their ability to implement their statutory missions now and in the future. These actions, which came without any consultation with Congress, let alone notification, raise serious questions about the future of the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) under your leadership.

We are at a critical moment in history where malign actors including Russia, China, and Iran, are using advanced tools and technology to undermine global democratic norms, spreading disinformation, and severely restricting their own free press to hamper access to independent news for their citizens. As these and other authoritarian regimes further crack down domestically, their citizens turn to outside media as their only trustworthy source of unbiased, accurate news. Regardless of the issues at USAGM that might be addressed during your tenure, the credibility and independence of these networks, as required by law, is critical for audiences overseas living under repressive regimes, the network's brave journalists who often come under threat for their work, and the future of U.S. broadcasting.

As the United States faces global challenges in the information space, it cannot afford to invest in an enterprise that denigrates its own journalists and staff to the satisfaction of dictators and despots, nor can it be one that fails to live up to its promise of providing access to a free and independent press. Congress set up these networks, and its governance structure at USAGM, to preserve the grantees' independence so they can act as a bulwark against disinformation through credible journalism.

We urge you to respect the unique independence that enables USAGM's agencies and grantees to help cultivate a free and open world. Given the bipartisan and bicameral concern with recent events, we intend to do a thorough review of USAGM's funding to ensure that United States international broadcasting is not politicized and the agency is able to fully and effectively carry out its core mission.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Richard J. Durbin
U.S. Senator



Lindsey O. Graham
U.S. Senator



Patrick Leahy
U.S. Senator



Jerry Moran
U.S. Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen

Chris Van Hollen
U.S. Senator



Susan M. Collins
U.S. Senator