

February XX, 2018

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

We write regarding the Department of Justice's (DOJ) enforcement of the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA).

On August 17, 2017, the DOJ National Security Division determined that RTTV America, a state-sponsored media organization funded by the Russian government, is obligated to register under the FARA. While we welcome this determination, Congress needs clarification as to whether additional foreign principals should also be required to register under FARA, including Qatar's Al Jazeera, which the U.S. State Department has indicated is state-controlled.

Founded by state charter in 1996 and headquartered in Doha, the Al Jazeera Media Network maintains an estimated global reach of 310 million people in more than 160 countries, and a presence in U.S. cities including Washington, New York, Chicago, Miami, and Los Angeles. Its broadcasts are easily accessible, including via social media, and, as stated by the U.S. Ambassador to Qatar in 2009, Al Jazeera is "one of Qatar's most valuable political and diplomatic tools" and was "used as a chip" to shape Qatar's relations with other governments.

We find it troubling that the content produced by this network often directly undermines American interests with favorable coverage of U.S. State Department-designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations, including Hamas, Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Jabhat al-Nusra, al-Qaeda's branch in Syria. Furthermore, Al Jazeera's record of radical anti-American, anti-Semitic, and anti-Israel broadcasts warrants scrutiny from regulators to determine whether this network is in violation of U.S. law. Such an investigation should cover the full range of activities undertaken by Al Jazeera in the United States, including reports that it infiltrated American 501(c)(3) and (c)(4) nonprofit organizations.

As highlighted by your Department, "the purpose of FARA is to inform the American public of the activities of agents working for foreign principals to influence U.S. Government officials or the American public with reference to the domestic or foreign policies of the United States, or with reference to the political or public interests, policies, or relations of a foreign country or a foreign political party."

We urge you and the Department to ensure that this law is rigorously enforced and applied fairly and uniformly to protect U.S. national interests from the undue influence of foreign nations. As such, we respectfully request that you provide our offices with detailed information about the DOJ's investigative process, and whether additional entities, including Al Jazeera,

meet the legal definition of “foreign principal” and if so, whether they should be required to register under FARA.

American citizens deserve to know whether the information and news media they consume is impartial, or if it is deceptive propaganda pushed by foreign nations.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Josh Gottheimer
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Lee Zeldin
MEMBER OF CONGRESS