

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

10 May 2022

The Honorable Gregory Meeks, Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael McCaul
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Meeks and Ranking Member McCaul:

The American People expect their elected representatives to conduct oversight of federal agencies, and ensure that wayward bureaucrats do not abuse their positions of public trust for personal gain. The extensive amount of waste, fraud, and abuse at the United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM) has been highlighted numerous times in the past few years, with little being done to hold wrongdoers to account.

The last time the House Foreign Affairs Committee held an oversight hearing on USAGM was September 24, 2020, to satiate the petty vendettas of self-aggrandizing agency officials who considered themselves above such “antiquated and irrelevant” concepts as Congressional oversight. These affronted individuals detested and marginalized the sorely needed reform agenda of then-Chief Executive Officer Michael Pack. Instead of using the hearing opportunity to meaningfully address the egregious security lapses at the Agency, this Committee effectively allowed Taxpayer resources to be expended on a glorified group therapy session for ineffective and/or corrupt government personnel.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) found that 1,500 USAGM employees and contractors between 2010 and 2020 – 40% of the Agency’s workforce – were not properly vetted before being hired. The former head of the Open Technology Fund (OTF), Libby Liu, somehow turned her institution into an independent nonprofit in September 2019, despite failing to receive Congressional authorization. Liu also successfully insisted that her Radio Free Asia emails be transferred over to OTF, which, at that point had become her own personal subagency - tightly shielded from federal oversight. Ms. Liu has never been subject to any accountability.

While still serving as CEO, Michael Pack retained the service of the McGuire-Woods law firm and instructed the firm to review the Agency’s operations and produce a report on its findings. The subsequent report was completed before President Biden took office in January 2021. Since that time, my office has called on the Agency for the release of the report, and I’m grateful to Chairman Meeks for joining me in a July 28, 2021 letter asking the Agency to do just that.

When it became evident that the Agency would not cooperate with a basic Congressional oversight request, I released the vast majority of the report into the Congressional Record on September 30, 2021. We have yet to receive substantive answers from the Agency pertaining to the contents of the McGuire-Woods report. USAGM only replied that the documents I entered into the Congressional Record do not represent the entirety of McGuire-Woods' work product for the Agency.

There are numerous documented examples of the Agency's formal cooperation in waste, fraud, and abuse – to include its abuse of the J-1 visa program to onboard foreign nationals (contrary to the intention of Executive Order 13788), its granting of security clearances at the confidential level or above to dozens of individuals, and its outright electioneering. In December 2015, VOA Persian News Network employee Masih Alinejad is seen pushing Americans to make negative statements against then-candidate Donald Trump; at one point even giving a high-five to someone expressing disapproval of Mr. Trump: <https://ir.voanews.com/a/3097627.html>. Notwithstanding Ms. Alinejad's past statements condemning the evil Iranian regime and promoting human rights in Iran, her role in disparaging a Presidential candidate amounts to electioneering, which violates federal law.

In 2020, VOA's Urdu Service advertised a clip of then-candidate Joe Biden at a video conference organized by a nonprofit - Emgage Action - to encourage American Muslims to support the Biden campaign. Emgage Action has endorsed the anti-Israel and anti-Semitic Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement.¹ The fact that a federal agency would so brazenly advertise the work of such an organization itself warrants great scrutiny.

USAGM has become a microcosm of what is wrong with the federal government. As a result of USAGM's failure to acknowledge Congress' oversight obligations, I respectfully request the Committee formally subpoena the CEO of USAGM and schedule an oversight hearing **no later than Thursday July 14, 2022**. I appreciate your cooperation with this request and look forward to your reply.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Perry', written in a cursive style.

SCOTT PERRY
Member of Congress
10th District, Pennsylvania

¹ Emgage Action. (2019, May 21). *Boycott, divest, Sanctions Movement (BDS) - emgage action*. Boycott, Divest, Sanctions Movement. Retrieved May 6, 2022, from <https://emgageaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Boycott-Divest-Sanctions-Movement-BDS.pdf>