

OVERSIGHT OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY
FOR GLOBAL MEDIA AND U.S. INTERNATIONAL
BROADCASTING EFFORTS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

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**OVERSIGHT OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY
FOR GLOBAL MEDIA AND U.S. INTER-
NATIONAL BROADCASTING EFFORTS**

Thursday, September 24, 2020

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Washington, DC

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:10 a.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Eliot Engel (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Mr. ENGEL. The Committee on Foreign Affairs will come to order. Without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess of the committee at any point, and all members will have 5 days to submit statements, extraneous material, and questions for the record subject to the length limitation in the rules.

To insert something into the record, please have your staff email the previously circulated address or contact full committee staff. As a reminder to members, staff, and others physically present in this room, per guidance from the Office of Attending Physician, masks must be worn at all times during today's proceedings, except when a member or a witness is speaking. Please also sanitize your seating area.

The chair views these measures as a safety issues and, therefore, an important matter of order and decorum for this proceeding.

For members participating remotely, please keep your video function on at all times, even when you are not recognized by the chair. Members are responsible for muting and unmuting themselves, and please remember to mute yourself after you have finished speaking. Consistent with House Resolution 965 and the accompanying regulations, staff will only mute members and witnesses, as appropriate, when they are not under recognition, to eliminate background noise.

I see that we have quorum and I now recognize myself for opening remarks.

The committee meets this morning to examine American international broadcasting efforts under the U.S. Agency for Global Media. For weeks, we expected the opportunity to hear from and question USAGM's new CEO, Mr. Michael Pack. Mr. Pack's brief tenure has been a rocky and controversial one. He immediately removed Voice of America's leadership as well as the presidents and boards of Radio Free Europe/Radio Free Liberty, Radio Free Asia, and the Middle East Broadcasting Network.

Removing the experienced boards from the services to replace them with new boards consisting of himself, his chief of staff, a number of Trump Administration political appointees, and the sen-

ior counsel of an organization the Southern Poverty Law Center has designated an anti-LGBT hate group. He tried to fire the acting CEO and board of the Open Technology Fund, but a court reversed his decision.

He removed the standards editor from Voice of America, the watchdog who makes sure VOA's content meets all the benchmarks of independent journalism. He declined to renew the visas for Voice of America journalists who came to the United States to produce unbiased news and information. I want to emphasize this: the U.S. Government asked these people to come work for us because of their expertise and language skills, to send news back to countries where press freedoms are often threatened. Now some of these people are being forced to leave the country. It is shocking that the U.S. Government would treat any journalist that way, let alone one we have asked to do the job.

Mr. Pack cutoff funding for Open Technology Fund, OTF, funding that Congress had approved. To remind everyone of what OTF does, they support development of circumvention and communication tools so that journalists and citizens are better able to share news and information in countries where governments try to censor and stifle those things. We are talking about places like Belarus, Iran, China, and Venezuela. And he has suspended a number of senior USAGM officials in what I believe to be a retaliatory and improper action.

Three months ago, I invited Mr. Pack to appear before this committee to answer our questions and explain his alarming first few weeks on the job. On August 3d, his office made a commitment to appear here today. Let me repeat that. On August 3d, his office made a commitment to appear here today. A week ago, shortly after the committee noticed this hearing, his office called back to tell us he was breaking his commitment. That is, breaking his commitment.

USAGM refused to provide specific reasons, stating only that there were "administrative proceedings" that required Mr. Pack's attention. The committee has since learned that Mr. Pack personally scheduled for today an administrative hearing for those people he suspended. He notified those individuals last Thursday, the same day USAGM told the committee he was backing out of this hearing.

My understanding is that under USAGM regulations and standard Federal agency practice, the head of agencies should not even be involved in such administrative hearings, that they should be left to the security professionals. USAGM proposed other dates in October, when the House is in recess. It is my view that Mr. Pack manufactured this conflict to get out of being here today, so the committee issued a subpoena to compel his testimony. With the chair at the witness table empty, Mr. Pack is now in defiance of that subpoena.

Our international broadcasting efforts are a critical foreign policy tool. USAGM's constituent services provide high-quality, independent news and information in some of the most closed-off places in the world. The best way to push back on the propaganda coming out of Russia, China, and elsewhere is to provide the truth, plain and simple. We need competent leadership at the helm of those ef-

forts. We need someone who understands journalism and respects journalists.

We need someone who understands that the head of a Federal agency is accountable and that Congress has a constitutional right to conduct oversight. We need someone who respects the law and allows our broadcasters to operate free from interference. Mr. Pack has made clear in his short tenure that he meets none of those qualifications.

He is making a mockery of a U.S. agency that has long enjoyed strong bipartisan support and he has shown tremendous disrespect for the committee, our committee, and its role overseeing USAGM. He is the wrong person for the job. He should resign. And if he does not, the President should fire him.

Since Mr. Pack will not talk to us, we will instead hear from some of those he has pushed out or tried to push out, competent public servants and journalists who, because they were committed to doing their jobs well, had no place in Mr. Pack's USAGM.

I will now yield to the ranking member for any opening comments he has.

Mr. McCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to each of the witnesses who are appearing before us here today.

The U.S. Agency for Global Media's mission is to further press an internet freedom around the world. Recently, I and many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have grown very concerned the Agency's mission is being undermined from the top. Most problematic to me has been what I can only characterize as the impoundment of funds meant for the Open Technology Fund. OTF was stood up as an independent grantee last year in a bipartisan manner by Congress. Yet despite a track record of success in providing internet access and other vital support to those in China, Iran, Russia, and other authoritarian States, CEO Pack has ignored the will of Congress and withheld millions of dollars in funding from OTF.

This is not a typical DC policy discussion. I believe his actions damaged support during the height of unrest in Hong Kong and they are continuing to do so today in Belarus. Their tragic lack of support to freedom and democracy movements is also regrettable because, in my judgment, it directly undermines key priorities of this Administration that I have discussed at the very top levels.

And that, unfortunately, isn't the only concerning action. In sum, USAGM has not been responsive to Congress in many cases. We have asked the Agency for their strategic response to the situation in Belarus, but have received no response. Our office inquired about the return of Radio Free Europe to Hungary, but received no response.

Also after most of the front office was placed on administrative leave, we simply asked for the names of those people who were heading the key offices at USAGM, but like so many of our other questions, this too was met with silence. We are a separate and equal branch of government and, Mr. Chairman, this committee deserves the respect of a response.

Make no mistake, I believe there is some reform that needs to be done at USAGM and that should take place, and any questionable content such as the video which aired on Voice of America that

seemingly appeared to endorse Vice President Biden, that should also be thoroughly investigated. There is no place for this type of politics inside the USAGM.

But I do not think we should throw the baby out with the bath water here, and I ask today once again for CEO Pack to release the funding approved by Congress under Article I of the Constitution and release the funding that was approved by Congress for OTF and to meaningfully engage with Congress to provide answers to the basic questions we must ask as part of our oversight duties.

Unfortunately, as Mr. Pack has decided not to attend today's hearing despite a subpoena from this committee and from Congress, I hope that today's witnesses can provide us with details about what is going on at the USAGM and his absence. I believe that, Mr. Chairman, if we—this technology is so important in countries like Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea to communicate within the country, inside and outside, and people in the country to communicate amongst themselves so that they can be in a position to yield back from their oppressors.

Without this important tool that Congress has authorized and funded, we will have a very difficult time in this mission for greater democracy and freedom throughout the world. And with that I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. I thank my friend, the ranking member. And pursuant to notice, the committee has convened today to conduct oversight of the U.S. Agency for Global Media and U.S. international broadcasting efforts. As Mr. Pack has decided to defy the committee's duly authorized subpoena, we will reset the witness table for our second panel.

Our witnesses today—

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman?

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Sires?

Mr. SIREs. I have a question. Why do not we leave the empty chair with his name on there to show the people that he just blew our subpoena, of Mr. Pack?

Mr. ENGEL. That is fine with me.

Mr. SIREs. Thank you.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Sires.

Our witnesses today have played a variety of roles at USAGM over the years and bring a wealth of experience on our international broadcasting efforts. Their backgrounds range from diplomacy to journalism to policy to government Administration. What they have in common is that Mr. Pack pushed them all out of their roles at USAGM, or tried to.

In my view, you have all served admirably and should be thanked for your hard work advancing USAGM's important mission.

Ambassador Karen Kornbluh is chair of the board of directors of the Open Technology Fund. She also served on the boards of the other services until Mr. Pack removed her, and on the Board of Governors. She also served as the U.S. Ambassador to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development during the Obama Administration.

Ambassador Ryan Crocker also sits on the board of the Open Technology Fund and was previously a member of the other service

boards. At the State Department, Ambassador Crocker was one of our most distinguished career diplomats serving as United States Ambassador to Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Kuwait, and Lebanon. I would say that is in the middle of the fight.

Ms. Amanda Bennett is the former director of the Voice of America where she served from 2016 until June of this year. She is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who previously worked at Bloomberg News, The Lexington Herald-Leader, The Oregonian, and the Wall Street Journal.

Mr. Jamie Fly is the former president of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and is now a senior fellow and senior advisor to the president at the German Marshall Fund. He previously worked as a counselor for Foreign and National Security Affairs for Senator Rubio, and served on the National Security Council staff during the George W. Bush Administration.

Mr. Grant Turner is the chief financial officer of the United States Agency for Global Media, and also served as the interim CEO of the Agency from the fall of last year until June. He previously served as the budget director for the Millennium Challenge Corporation and at the Office of Management and Budget during the Bush and Obama Administrations.

Without objection, your complete written testimony will be made part of the record of this hearing, and I will recognize you for 5 minutes, each, to summarize your testimony.

Mr. Turner, we will begin with you.

**STATEMENT OF GRANT TURNER, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER,
U.S. AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA**

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, and members of the committee. I am testifying today to disclose significant concerns about the U.S. Agency for Global Media specifically related to the dire events that have been unfolding at the Agency over the past few months. First, though, let me start by telling you a little bit about myself and USAGM.

I have been privileged to serve in the U.S. Federal Civil Service as a career employee for 17 years, most of the last four at this Agency. My tenure has spanned multiple Presidential Administrations. I began working for the Federal Government with GAO and then I worked for OMB for 6 years, three under President Bush and three under President Obama.

I have served as the budget director for the MCC and also for the CDC in Atlanta, Georgia. I have a lot of experience in government operations, but nothing in my 17 years come even close to the gross mismanagement, the abuse of authority, the violations of law that have occurred since Michael Pack assumed the role of CEO at USAGM in June of this year.

Until I was abruptly removed by Mr. Pack in mid-August, I served as the Agency's chief financial officer. For the 9-months preceding that I was the acting CEO. Based on my many interactions with this committee and your staffs on a bipartisan basis, I know you care very much about our mission to bring truthful news and information to our audiences overseas, and I truly thank you for that years-long partnership.

Today, USAGM networks broadcast in 61 languages to over 100 countries worldwide, reaching 350 million viewers, listeners, and readers weekly. Our networks include the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Asia, the Middle East Broadcasting Networks, the Office of Cuba Broadcasting, and our newest grantee, the Open Technology Fund. They are truly a gift from the American people to the world.

We sometimes forget living in our very rich media environment that much of the world is quite underserved. As one of my colleagues on this hearing, Amanda Bennett, is fond of saying, our organization exports the First Amendment. It is part of the foundation of our Nation's success. So I am very proud to be associated with the 4,000 employees that do the work at USAGM and it is a privilege to be associated with the journalists, the editors, the production specialists, technology experts, and support staff. They are very passionate about what they do.

During the past 4 years, the Agency has made notable and important progress especially thanks to the input and support of this committee. So thank you. We have modernized the platforms that we broadcast on, moving as media markets evolve and going to where our audiences want us to be, from radio to TV to social media. A testament to how well the Agency has performed in the last several years is borne out by numerous metrics.

For instance, between the beginning of Fiscal Year 2016 and now, our global weekly audience has grown from 226 million people per week to 350 million people per week, a 55 percent increase. It is a good example that we are responding effectively to fast-moving media markets, and it is a tangible demonstration that people across the globe crave the truth.

Our colleagues are journalists. The Agency does not do propaganda. Our charters mandate that the editorial decisions are made without outside influence. They are protected by what we call a firewall and that firewall is much more than an abstract concept. It is the law and it has been the law for over three decades.

Our audiences live in places that are awash in government spin, propaganda, and misinformation, or countries where there simply is not any press and we fill that vacuum with journalism that aims to be the best in class. Unfortunately, I have worried about what Mr. Pack has done since his arrival. Like many of you, I am worried about the credibility and the goodwill of our networks being destroyed.

It has taken, literally, decades to build this trust with our audience and, tragically, it can be destroyed far more quickly. That is what I fear is happening now. I am worried about our failure to support important technology tools developed by the Open Technology Fund. OTF funds internet firewall circumvention tools used by our audiences in Iran and China and Russia and other closed societies to freely access the internet and our content.

Within days of Mr. Pack's arrival, he declared war on OTF. First, he started by firing its leadership. Then he choked off its funding. At one point, after learning from OTF that we might lose important tools, I sent an urgent email to Mr. Pack's team essentially pleading for permission to release funds to OTF and I highlighted what was at stake.

For instance, in the case of Iran, we risked losing 84 percent of the audience if we did not fund OTF's tools. To put this in context, we are the No. 1 international broadcaster in Iran. Many people do not know this. We have nearly 25 percent of Iranian adults tuning in to our coverage each week. Voice of America and Radio Free Europe's Radio Farda brand are the No. 1 TV and radio broadcasters there.

Here is a country where we worry about a war breaking out where the Iranian people are fed a steady diet of misinformation and half-truths about America, but every night, a quarter million of Iranian adults—a quarter, rather, of Iranian adults tune in to USAGM. From the VOA studios that are just two blocks from this room to the living rooms of the Iranian people, we bring unfiltered, truthful news about America, our policies, and our country's values. That is tremendous soft power and it is, unfortunately, at grave risk right now.

OTF is not the only example. In the two and a half months I worked under Mr. Pack, he repeatedly breached the firewall designed to protect journalists and editors from political influence. Months ago, he removed standards editor Steve Springer from Voice of America. He removed the executive editor from Radio Free Asia, Bay Fang, who is the person who leads our overall China strategy at that network.

It was Mr. Pack who simultaneously fired the presidents of all our networks including Jamie Fly who is testifying here today. Those actions and many others led the Senate appropriators to put a hold on some of our funding. Mr. Pack chose to ignore that hold that they placed on our funding. To be clear, Mr. Pack's failures to act in many areas are of concern of me, folks who are testifying today, and the employees of USAGM, and I think all of you.

To close my remarks, I would just like to quickly mention a few other things, irresponsible acts of financial mismanagement that have taken hold under Mr. Pack. For example, I found myself frequently fielding calls from the leadership of our grantee networks who were being starved of resources because Mr. Pack's team would not disburse funds on a timely basis.

Both Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Asia contacted me to say if they did not receive funds soon they would not be able to meet payroll. You know, this is no way to run a railroad. Mr. Pack's team refused to approve a simple cleaning contract for our Kuwait shortwave facility in the middle of a pandemic.

They refused for weeks to approve a contract to order toilet paper for our Thailand transmitting facility. This had nothing to do with shortages of toilet paper during the pandemic. We had sources identified. Mr. Pack's team just did not want to approve the order for weeks. I do not know why. So staff just brought in their own toilet paper from home. That unusual problem still existed when I left the Agency. Maybe it is still the case today.

Based on what I have witnessed from small issues to very big ones, I do not believe Mr. Pack and his team came to run the Agency. I do not think they even like it. This just is not what normal people do. It is not what normal management looks like, certainly not in the world I come from and probably not in yours either. I fear their mismanagement will continue to erode the performance

of the Agency and with any misstep they will just use that to fire more people and continue to diminishing the Agency.

So to close, we need your help. You will hear from excellent people today. Please continue to practice the kind of strong oversight that you are doing. It is truly helpful and it may stop or at least slow the abuses that you are hearing about. USAGM is a very valuable Agency to help create the kind of world that most Americans want to live in.

I look forward to answering any of your questions later in the hearing. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Turner follows:]

House Foreign Affairs Committee
September 24, 2020 Hearing
“Oversight of the United States Agency for Global Media and U.S.
International Broadcasting Efforts”
Written Testimony of Grant K. Turner
Former Chief Financial Officer and Acting CEO,
United States Agency for Global Media

Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, and members of the committee.

I am providing this written testimony pursuant to Committee subpoena to disclose significant concerns about the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), specifically related to the dire events that have been unfolding at the agency over the past few months. I am providing this information in my personal capacity; I am not representing USAGM or any other government agency.

INTRODUCTION

I have been privileged to serve in the federal civil service as a career employee for 17 years, most of the last four at USAGM. I have worked in five federal government agencies across three Presidential administrations, both Republican and Democrat. During my career, I have learned a great deal about federal government best practices, and I have seen a fair amount of challenges and problems as well. But nothing in my 17 years comes close to the gross mismanagement, the abuse of authority, the violations of law that have occurred since Michael Pack assumed the role of USAGM Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in June of this year.

BACKGROUND

About Me

Until I was abruptly removed by CEO Pack in mid-August, I served as the agency’s Chief Financial Officer (CFO) for approximately four years. For the nine months preceding Mr. Pack’s arrival, I was interim CEO.

Prior to USAGM, I held increasingly responsible positions at four other federal agencies. I started at the Government Accountability Office before moving to work as a Budget Examiner at the Office of Management Budget (OMB) for six years, three under President George W. Bush and three under President Barack Obama. I then went on to be the Budget Director for the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the Budget Director for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia.

About USAGM

In 2020, USAGM networks broadcast in 61 languages to over 100 countries worldwide—reaching 350 million viewers, listeners, and readers weekly. Our networks, including the Voice of America (VOA), Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Asia, the Middle East Broadcasting Networks, the Office of Cuba Broadcasting, and the Open Technology Fund, are truly a gift from the American people to the world.

We sometimes forget—living in our rich media environment—that much of the world is quite underserved, especially when it comes to accurate news and information. As one of my colleagues, former VOA Director Amanda Bennett, is fond of saying: Our organization exports the First Amendment. It is part of the foundation of our nation's success.

I am extremely proud of the agency's 4,000 employees. It is a privilege to be associated with the many brave journalists and editors, the production specialists, technology experts, and support staff. They are passionate about the work they do.

Accomplishments During My Time at USAGM

During the past four years, USAGM has made notable and important progress, especially thanks to the input and support from this Committee. We have modernized the platforms that we broadcast on, moving as media markets evolve and going to where our audiences want us to be. From radio to TV to social media.

A testament to how well the agency has performed in the last several years is borne out by numerous metrics. For instance, between the beginning of FY 2016 and now, our global weekly audience has grown from 226 million per week to 350 million per week—a 55% increase. It is a good example that we are responding—effectively—to fast-moving media markets worldwide. And it is a tangible demonstration that people across the globe crave the truth—because that is what USAGM is all about.

Our audiences often live in places that are awash in government spin, propaganda, and misinformation; or countries where there simply is no press. We fill the vacuum with journalism that aims to be best in class.

NEW CEO IMPERILS USAGM

Based on my many interactions with this Committee—on a bipartisan basis—I know you care very much about USAGM's mission: to bring truthful news and information to our audiences overseas. Thank you for that years' long partnership.

Significant problems have befallen the agency since CEO Michael Pack arrived and I have deep concerns about the trajectory USAGM is on. I know many of you share these concerns. Like you, I am worried about the credibility and the goodwill of our networks being destroyed. It has taken literally decades to build this trust with our audiences. Tragically, it can be destroyed far more quickly.

That is what is happening now.

Attacks on the Open Technology Fund

The Open Technology Fund (OTF) is a new USAGM grantee. For FY2020, USAGM's Congressionally-approved spend plan outlines \$19.825 million for the organization's work. OTF funds internet firewall circumvention tools used by our audiences in Iran, China, Russia, and other closed societies, so people can freely access the internet and USAGM's content. OTF also supports privacy tools that human rights activists around the world depend on to remain free from government surveillance and tracking. They are used by persecuted minorities like the Uyghurs in China, LGBTQ youth in Africa, and our own journalists and sources worldwide.

Within days of CEO Pack's arrival, he declared war on OTF. First, he started by firing its leadership – the grantee's CEO, its President, and their board of directors. Then, he froze the organization's funding. As CFO, I witnessed the tightening fiscal noose being placed around OTF's neck and sent an urgent email to Mr. Pack's team. I essentially pleaded for permission to release funds to OTF. I highlighted what was at stake as they recklessly pursued control over the grantee. For instance, in the case of Iran, we risked losing 84% of our audience in that country if we did not fund OTF's tools.

To put the effect of that audience loss in greater context, we are the number one international broadcaster in Iran. We have nearly 25% of Iranian adults tuning into our coverage each week. Here is a country where we worry about war breaking out, where the Iranian people are fed a steady diet of misinformation and half-truths about America. But reliably, a quarter of Iranian adults tune into USAGM. From the VOA studio in the basement of the Cohen building two blocks from the Capitol, we bring unfiltered, truthful news about America, our policies, and our country's values. That is tremendous soft power.

But my urgent pleas for funding were met with silence from Mr. Pack and his staff — an indifferent shrug. It was truly shocking to me.

Breaching the Statutory Firewall

Mr. Pack has also threatened the credibility of the agency's work through illegal actions and a misunderstanding of USAGM's core values and mission. My colleagues are journalists. The agency's networks do not exist to message propaganda— that is what others do. The Charters of VOA and the other networks mandate that editorial decisions are made without outside influence – that they are protected by what we refer to as the Firewall. The Firewall is far more than an abstract concept. It is the law. And it has been the law for decades. It requires us to ensure journalistic independence. In the two and a half months I worked under CEO Pack, he and his staff repeatedly breached the Firewall designed to protect journalists and editors from political influence.

Removing the Standards and Practices Editor: At the start of his tenure, CEO Pack removed the Standards Editor at Voice of America – the person there to ensure on a day-to-day basis that we adhere to the best practices of journalism. The position remains vacant to this day.

Simultaneously Firing the Network Presidents: It was Mr. Pack who simultaneously fired on June 17, 2020—just days after his confirmation—the Presidents of all the agency’s broadcast networks, including: the head of Radio Free Asia, Bay Fang; the head of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Jamie Fly; and the head of the Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Alberto Fernandez. The Director and Deputy Director of the Voice of America, Amanda Bennett and Sandy Sugawara, resigned shortly before the simultaneous firings. These actions, and others, precipitated a *hold* placed on the agency’s funding by our Senate Appropriations Subcommittee (majority and minority), and a \$166 million budget cut from our House Appropriations Subcommittee (discussed in greater detail below). Both committees were deeply concerned about the actions Mr. Pack had taken.

Denying Visas to VOA Journalists: CEO Pack also targeted VOA journalists who are foreign nationals holding J-1 visas which permit them to work in the U.S. These visas need to be renewed every year. Mr. Pack refuses to renew them and the J-1 renewal applications have been sitting on his desk *for weeks and months*.

To be clear, Mr. Pack’s failure to act risks putting the lives of many of these journalists—and their families—in danger. Without renewed visas, some will have to return to their home countries – including countries that, to put it kindly, “pursue” journalists who do not toe the line.

Getting rid of these journalists is also gross mismanagement. They bring critical skills to the agency – often decades of experience, language skills we need, and deep cultural knowledge about our audiences. They are very, very difficult reporters to replace. And now, after betraying these colleagues, it will be exceedingly difficult to recruit new talent.

Together and separately these actions represent illegal efforts by CEO Pack and his team (Executive branch employees outside the newsroom) to improperly direct, pressure, coerce, threaten, interfere with, and otherwise impermissibly influence editorial staff.

It must be stopped.

Gross Mismanagement and Abuse of Authority

CEO Pack’s misconduct extends beyond Firewall violations. Many, irresponsible acts of financial mismanagement have taken hold during his tenure.

Prolonged Freeze of Hiring, Contracting, and IT, and Impoundment of Funding: On his first day in the office, CEO Pack ordered the freeze of all hiring, contracting, and information technology (IT) migrations. In my experience, it is not unusual for new management to ask for a pause in activities so that they can gain a better understanding of an agency. What *is* highly unusual is that the temporary freeze continued for weeks and then months. I believe the freeze continues to this day, with every hiring, contracting, and IT action requiring a specific approval from the CEO’s leadership team — typically granted only after a lengthy and unexplained waiting period.

The freeze has and is hurting the agency every day. For example, I found myself frequently fielding calls from the leadership of our grantee networks who were being starved of resources because CEO Pack’s team would not disburse funds on a timely basis. Radio Free Europe and

Radio Free Asia both indicated that if they did not receive funding soon, *they would not be able to make payroll.*

In another instance, CEO Pack's team refused to approve a *simple cleaning contract* for our Kuwait Shortwave Facility. In the middle of a pandemic.

Additionally, his team refused — for weeks — to approve a contract to order *toilet paper* for our Thailand transmitting station. This had nothing to do with shortages of toilet paper during the pandemic. We had sources identified. Yet, inexplicably, the CEO's team refused to approve the order. The problem necessitated that the local staff bring in their own toilet paper from home. The problem still existed when CEO Pack fired me (in mid-August 2020). For all I know, the problem still exists today.

In the aggregate, the various freezes and tremendous slow-down in operations risked material deviation from the agency's Congressionally-approved Spend Plan. It posed the risk that millions of dollars would not be spent as appropriated by Congress, a possible violation of the *Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act.*

Similarly, CEO Pack's refusal to disburse funding to OTF, disregarding the Congressionally-approved and program-specific Internet Freedom Spend Plan, also raises questions of the impoundment of funding.

Ignoring Congressional Notification Requirements and Oversight

CEO Pack has additionally — and I believe intentionally — disregarded a critical Congressional Notification requirement. In early August, Mr. Pack ordered Radio Free Asia, Radio Free Europe, and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks to return funding they had received for internet freedom initiatives during FY 2019. He transmitted notice to them in the afternoon and asked for the money to be returned *within hours.* As a result, millions of dollars in *paper checks* were delivered to Mr. Pack's office over the next day, without the knowledge of the CFO's office, outside of the agency's financial internal controls, without the use of a grant amendment to memorialize and record the transaction, and in clear violation of law.

Section 7015 of the agency's annual appropriations bill (P.L. 116-94 for FY 2020), requires that any reprogramming in excess of \$1,000,000 must be notified to the Committees on Appropriations 15 days *in advance* of such reprogramming. This Congressional notice requirement was disregarded and I was met with profanities from CEO Pack's immediate staff for raising the issue. In total, approximately \$3.5 million was moved without the legally required notice to Congress.

At the time of my removal in mid-August, the Congressional Notification requirements — which are key to both the House and Senate's financial oversight of the agency — continued to be ignored. In fact, after my removal, I learned that my successor as Acting CFO resigned rather than engage in what he believed to be illegal activity connected to the failure to notify the Congressional appropriators.

The House Appropriations Subcommittee for State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs have been so dismayed by CEO Pack's actions that on July 13, 2020, the committee proposed a dramatic reduction in funding for the agency for FY 2021 of nearly \$166 million below the FY 2020 enacted level.¹ In the Report accompanying the House's appropriations bill, the committee wrote:

A central theme set forth in the standards and principles portion of the Act is that the work of USAGM and its entities be vigilant in maintaining a strong firewall between the work of its entities and grantees and any political influence by federal and other government officials. The statutory firewall and highest standards of professional journalism are further described in part 531 of title 22, Code of Federal Regulations.

However, recent action by the USAGM Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to summarily dismiss senior Agency officials and entity heads, including the head of the Voice of America (VOA) office of the standards editor, raise serious questions about the Agency's commitment to maintaining the firewall and upholding the highest standards of professional journalism. For this reason, and until the Committee is assured that Agency leadership will uphold longstanding principles of independent journalism described in part 531 of title 22, Code of Federal Regulations, the Committee recommendation includes \$632,732,000 for International Broadcasting Operations, which is the same as the budget request and \$165,964,000 below fiscal year 2020. The Committee will continue to review actions of the USAGM as the appropriations process for fiscal year 2021 proceeds and reassess Agency funding actions and requirements prior to the conclusion of such process.

The House bill's appropriations language also added a new proviso specifying that the funds appropriated to USAGM would be available only in accordance with the statutory Firewall and the highest standards of professional journalism, and that, within 90 days of enactment of the bill, the Inspector General for the Department of State had to audit and issue a report on compliance by the USAGM CEO and the USAGM news networks with the Firewall regulation.

Risk of Anti-Deficiency Act Violations

Similarly, shortly afterward CEO Pack fired the network Presidents, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs – on a bipartisan basis – placed a hold on a necessary funding transfer to the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB), a USAGM component. The funds were needed to meet payroll and other operational costs at OCB. Without that source, the agency could not meet OCB operational costs and would be at risk of incurring financial obligations in excess of available appropriations – a violation the federal Anti-Deficiency Act (ADA), 31 U.S.C. §§ 1341(a), 1342 and 1517(a), which carries civil and criminal penalties.

¹ House Committee on Appropriations, House Report 116-444 at 34-35 (July 13, 2020), available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CRPT-116hrpt444/pdf/CRPT-116hrpt444.pdf>.

CEO Pack and his staff ignored the Senate hold; they took no action, despite my frequent reminders. By avoiding the Senate appropriators week after week, failing to meet with them to address a growing list of problematic actions, the agency was placed in the impossible position of either disregarding the Senate's hold or committing an ADA violation. As the weeks passed, I grew increasingly concerned. On the evening of Thursday July 16, 2020, I emailed Mora Namdar, USAGM's Acting Vice President for Legal, Compliance, and Risk to inform her that we, USAGM, needed to move funds to OCB imminently to ensure that payroll and contract obligations were funded. I sent a similar, contemporaneous email, to Diane Cullo, CEO Pack's Deputy Chief of Staff. I wrote:

[W]e don't want to commit an anti-deficiency act violation by spending money we don't have, and we also don't want to layoff contractors and furlough federal staff to try and keep operating at a greatly reduced funding level.

Shortly thereafter, Ms. Namdar directed that *no funds* be transferred to OCB – meaning that we risked an ADA violation as payroll and other expenses were incurred. Ultimately, with authorization from the new Chief Operating Officer, my advice prevailed and we transferred the necessary funding to OCB.

Yet despite this incident and my warnings, Mr. Pack and his team continued to ignore inquiries from Congressional appropriators, refusing to address their numerous and important concerns, which constitutes gross mismanagement of that relationship with these key oversight bodies.

Disclosures of Wrongdoing

I have exercised my rights as a federal whistleblower to disclose the above acts of wrongdoing, and others, to the Department of State's Office of Inspector General (OIG). Attached as Exhibit 1 is a document I prepared and provided to OIG summarizing my protected disclosures. Exhibit 2 are copies of emails I also provided to OIG.

* * *

Based on what I have witnessed — from small issues to very big ones — I do not believe Mr. Pack and his team came to run the agency. I do not think they even like it. This is just not what normal managers in any organization do. Not in the world I come from. I fear this mismanagement will continue to erode the performance of the agency, and with any missteps, they will use them to justify firing more people, cancelling more programs, and continuing to diminish the agency with each turn.

To close, we need your help. Please continue to practice the kind of strong oversight you are doing today. It truly helps, and may stop, or at least slow, the abuses you are hearing about. USAGM is an incredibly valuable agency to help create the kind of world that most Americans want to live in.

Thank you.

EXHIBIT 1**PROTECTED WHISTLEBLOWER DISCLOSURES TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL, JULY 2020****by Grant Turner, USAGM Chief Financial Officer and former Chief Executive Officer***July 17, 2020*

I advised Todd Jones, of the State Department Office of Inspector General of pressure exerted upon me and the Office of the CFO by Ms. Mora Namdar, the Acting VP of Legal, to ignore financial management controls and to inappropriately withhold transferring money to the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB). Withholding the money would have been politically expedient, however, it would also force USAGM to risk running out of money in the OCB account and committing an Anti-Deficiency Act (ADA) violation. For weeks, I had warned the new USAGM leadership team that they needed to engage with the Senate Appropriations committee to lift the *hold* placed on the transfer of funds. By avoiding the Senate appropriators week after week, and failing to meet with them to address the series of troubling actions Mr Pack had taken since assuming office, the agency was placed in the position of either disregarding the Senate's *hold* on the funds transfer or committing an Anti-Deficiency Act violation. While ignoring a *hold* is politically unwise, committing an ADA violation is illegal. The ADA contains actual criminal penalties for some violations, one of the few administrative laws with such penalties, and it often ends with the dismissal of the Budget Director (who works for me) or the CFO (my position).

Todd Jones scheduled a time on Tuesday, July 21, 2020 to speak with him in greater detail, along with his supervisor, Beverly O'Neill. I indicated that I had an extensive list of protected disclosures to make under the whistleblower act.

July 21, 2020 and Later

I spoke with Todd Jones and Beverly O'Neill of the State Department Office of Inspector General on July 21, 2020 and continued to flag some items for concern as the weeks progressed. In addition to the risk of an Anti-Deficiency Act violation, which I had previously disclosed, I outlined a broad series of other problems which I placed into three categories: (1) Violations of the USAGM Firewall, (2) Severe Impacts to the Agency's Mission, and (3) Gross Mismanagement. These three groupings are further enumerated below, with additional detail.

Violations of the USAGM Firewall:

1. Removal of Steve Springer, Standards Editor of the Voice of America. The new CEO and leadership team inappropriately reached into the news operations of VOA and impacted the ability of the organization to deliver news of the highest journalistic quality. Mr. Springer was reassigned to

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Andre Mendes, the new Chief Operating Officer brought in by Mr. Pack. Removing Steve Springer took away key knowledge of journalistic management and practice which affects the quality of the journalism. The statutory firewall is contained in Section 305(b) of the US International Broadcasting Act of 1994 and further described in a regulation published in the Federal Register on June 15, 2020.

2. Removal of Bay Fang, Executive Editor of Radio Free Asia. Bay Fang was the Acting President of RFA when Mr. Pack assumed his position. On his first physical day in the office he removed Ms. Fang, along with the heads of all of USAGM's news organizations and the Open Technology Fund. Ms. Fang, per her employment agreement returned to her previous role as Executive Editor of RFA, a journalistic position. The new CEO and leadership team inappropriately ordered the new acting President of Radio Free Asia to fire Ms. Fang, impacting the ability of the organization to deliver news of the highest journalistic quality.
3. The new CEO and his new leadership team conducted a broad attack on a specific class of journalists possessing J-1 Visas. This move was suspiciously contemporaneous with the White House's announcement of stricter immigration policies and visa requirements. This action curtailed the ability of VOA to cover the news to the highest journalistic standard.
4. The new CEO and his leadership team put a freeze on broadcasting network personnel actions, contracting actions, and technical migrations, which inhibited the networks from covering the news to the highest journalistic standard within their approved budgetary resources. The freeze was lifted on grantee organizations the hour before USAGM attended its first court hearing to respond to a lawsuit brought by one of the agency's grantees, the Open Technology Fund.
5. The CEO required USAGM networks to carry a link to an "editorials" page on each of their websites, with a variety of press releases and other Administration-produced information from departments of the USG; this violates the firewall by dictating elements of how the journalistic operations of the agency would take place.
6. The CEO and new leadership team directed that a member of their team would participate in all of VOA's planning meetings for coverage of the upcoming Presidential election. VOA refused.
7. VOA was not allowed control over potential disciplinary actions related to a story run in VOA's Urdu language service regarding presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden's campaign appeal to Muslim voters. It is inappropriate for anyone other than the VOA Director and management to make judgements on the quality of the journalism at VOA and they should be the ones to initiate any disciplinary action on their staff.
8. VOA was given a quote for a news article from the USAGM CEO and leadership team and instructed to take it verbatim and in its entirety. VOA's Director of Central News refused.

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EXHIBIT 1**Severe Impacts to the Agency's Mission:**

1. Failure to properly fund the Open Technology Fund risks losing internet firewall circumvention tools needed by 85% of our Iranian audience to access our content. Loss of this key audience would greatly hamper one of the key countries USAGM focuses its content.
2. Failure to properly fund the Open Technology Fund risks losing internet firewall circumvention tools needed by 40% of our Mandarin-speaking audience in China. Loss of this key audience would greatly hamper one of the key countries USAGM focuses its content.
3. Failure to properly fund the Open Technology Fund risks losing encryption/privacy tools that support the Hong Kong protesters; Iran protesters; reporters and sources worldwide; LGBTQ youth in numerous countries; and human rights activists globally.
4. Failure to grant or extend J-1 visas for journalists at VOA risks losing the critical reporting skills needed to engage our audiences, with especially large impact on smaller language services where J-1 visa holders may comprise a large percentage of the staff.

Gross Mismanagement:

1. The new CEO failed to timely approve grant amendments, including to the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN) who had not received its April/May/June funding after months of waiting. This has created a growing cash-flow crisis. (As of my discussion with the OIG on July 21, 2020, and as of my last day in the office on August 12, 2020, these funds had still not been disbursed).
2. The new CEO failed to timely approve grant amendments, including amendments covering multiple months for Radio Free Asia (RFA). The President of the organization began calling me on a near-daily basis to plead for relief. I made near-daily inquiries to the new leadership team but it appeared to have little to know effect. After approval of a tranche of funding covering April/May/June, RFA continues to wait for funding covering subsequent months.
3. The new CEO failed to timely approve grant funding for multiple months for Radio Free Europe (RFE), whose CFO began calling me with increasingly dire warnings, including stating in approximately late-June or early-July: "If you do not send us funding very soon, we will not be able to make payroll next week." While a May/June package was approved after this dire declaration, RFE continues to wait on a July funding package.
4. Failure to timely approve dozens of contracts at the agency, including health and safety-related items such as a cleaning contract for the Kuwait Transmitting Facility during the current pandemic.

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5. The new CEO and leadership team selected Board members for the grantee organizations without true fiduciary independence and without any obvious qualifications other than political loyalty. In communications with the grantees, the new CEO indicated that the board members would ratify any of his requests of them, which demonstrates that they are not truly independent actors.
6. The new leadership team misled the DC circuit of the US District Court, indicating during a hearing at the beginning of July that it would imminently provide funding to the Open Technology Fund. As of my discussion with the OIG on July 21, 2020, the new CEO had not approved these funds. The CEO finally approved preparing a grant agreement on the last day of July, however, as of my last day in the office on August 12, 2020, he had still not signed the package which would allow the funds to be disbursed to OTF.
7. The new CEO and the leadership team, ordered that Ms Mora Namdar, the acting VP of Legal, would be the only individual authorized to communicate with the Open Technology Fund. I warned the CEO and the new leadership team that Ms Namdar did not have the qualifications to serve in this role and it would greatly weaken our oversight of millions of dollars in federal funding.
8. Ms Namdar, in coordination with the CEO and the new leadership team, ordered USAGM grantees to return at least \$3.4 million in FY 2019 funding. This was done without the knowledge of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, taking place outside of normal financial controls, without an amendment to the grant agreements controlling the legal relationship between the grantees and the federal government, and utilizing paper checks. The new CEO and leadership team also sought to make these funds immediately available without proper Congressional Notification, as required by the annual appropriations law, and without regard to the requirement for approval and reapportionment by the Office of Management and Budget. When they were alerted of these requirements, they disregarded them. Andre Mendes told me in a call during the week of August 10th that when Ms Namdar was forwarded my email describing these requirements, and the need to research if the funds would be available to us, Ms Namdar reacted to the cautions by saying, "Grant needs to do his fucking job!". Andre Mendes told me that Ms Namdar is trying to conduct a "character assassination" of me and of him to the new CEO and other members of the leadership team. The day after my removal, Andre Mendes and Ms Namdar received similar advice from Mr. John Barkhamer the Deputy CFO of the agency (and the presumed Acting CFO following my removal). Disregarding the advice of Mr. Barkhamer (the new senior financial officer for the agency following my removal), the CEO and new leadership team instructed him to make millions of dollars immediately available. Mr. Barkhamer resigned effective immediately feeling he had no choice but to resign or take an inappropriate and potentially illegal action. Mr. Barkhamer related this all to me following his resignation.
9. In an email to me in late July or early August, Mora Namdar, the VP of Legal, instructed me to "cease and desist" preparing a grant amendment to transfer funding from Radio Free Asia to the Open

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Technology Fund. This funding included \$2.9 million in unencumbered funds which would have been helpful to OTF in continuing to fund important tools supporting audiences in Iraq, China, Pakistan, Venezuela, and other countries. This \$2.9 million was part of the at least \$3.4 million in paper checks returned to USAGM during my last week in the office (see #8 above). In addition, approximately half of \$1.2 million in operational funds for salaries of OTF staff was also to be part of the transfer. And over \$6 million in funding committed to existing contracts signed by the OTF program when it was part of Radio Free Asia. Importantly, USAGM had already been made aware that the contracts themselves had already been transferred to OTF in approximately April of 2020. Therefore, we were aware that OTF had assumed the financial liabilities for these contracts, but we had not transferred the funding necessary to meet this liability. I raised this issue with the leadership team and it was a primary driver for preparing a grant amendment to move the funds. Ms. Namdar's direction to "cease and desist" even the preparation of such a grant amendment is consistent with her pattern of behavior to deny the OTF grantee any funding and to cause its failure.

10. I flagged for the leadership team that the variety of delays in providing grant funding, as well as approving contract actions, would make it difficult for the agency to effectively spend the funding appropriated to the agency by Congress, and that it may be a challenge to comply with our Congressionally-approved Spend Plan for FY 2020. In particular, within the federal (non-grantee) parts of the organization, there are long lead times and complex procurement process to be observed in ensuring contracts are entered into properly. The 4th quarter of the fiscal year is already fraught with challenges and the delays in approving contract, personnel actions, and technical migrations put us at even greater risk of error or misspending. Combined with the failure to provide funding on a timely basis to our grantees, and my expectation that we might deny OTF part or all of the \$7.7 million in funding it was due in September, could leave large amounts of money unused. I conveyed this concern to Andre Mendes, the Chief Operating Officer, and said that we could have millions of dollars unused as the fiscal year winds down; I said that this could be seen as impoundment of funding. I said that in the past, if the federal side of the operations had unused funding, we could request to move those funds to our grantee broadcasters, which would allow the funds to be obligated and carried over on the books of the grantees. However, I pointed out that this would require a Congressional Notification and that our appropriators were unlikely to accommodate the agency given the many concerns they have about USAGM operations at the present time.

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USAGM EMAILS PRODUCED TO DEPARTMENT OF STATE OIG

From: Grant Turner <GTurner@usagm.gov>
Date: July 13, 2020 at 12:28:51 AM EDT
To: Andre Mendes <amendes@usagm.gov>
Subject: **Issues for SACFO meeting and resolution**

Hi Andre,

Following up on my last email, I wanted to provide you some thoughts related to finance, operations, and the eventual meeting with the Senate appropriators to free up the OCB money. I think the Hill's concerns are not OCB-specific in most cases and are fairly obvious ones, similar to mine and likely yours, so easy to enumerate. I think most of the issues are the broad subjects below. You may not have the answers to all, but perhaps Diane, Emily, Michael, or Mr Pack can fill in the blanks to help address the concerns and prep for the meeting with the Senate to lift the Hold:

—Explanation for the mass firings of the network heads and the general strategy going forward. (Also the recent firing of Bay Fang).

—The impact of the continuing freeze on contracting actions, personnel actions, and technical migrations (particularly on the federal side, but also during the time the freeze applied to the grantees). Impacts on health and safety related to covid or otherwise.

—Governance issues at USAGM including violations of the firewall, such as the removal of Steve Springer as standards editor of VOA; the makeup of the grantee boards, etc.

—The status of the lawsuit with the Open Technology Fund and the qualifications of the Acting CEO at this boutique organization.

—The current status of OTF's grant agreement and various work they fund, including impacts on human rights activists, journalists/sources worldwide, and including protesters in Hong Kong. (The July funding still has not gone out).

—The status of the J-1 visas; threats to journalists who may need to return home; impact on operations; and the reasons for conducting the reviews.

Best,

Grant

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EXHIBIT 2

From: Grant Turner <GTurner@usagm.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 7:00 PM
To: Morvared Namdarkhan
Cc: David Kligerman
Subject: OCB CN and Senate "hold" on USAGM funds

Hi Mora,

Just wanted to flag for you an issue that you/OGC may have to help us with at some point soon. You may be aware that we sent a congressional notification to the Hill a number of weeks ago to move funds from our buying power maintenance account to the Office of Cuba Broadcasting. OCB's budget was cut in the FY 20 appropriations bill from \$29 million down to \$21 million. At the time, we told the Hill that we couldn't close that gap in a single fiscal year and they provided a transfer authority for us to move up to \$7M from our buying power maintenance account to OCB. This would keep OCB funded and operating as we worked towards pivoting OCB to a lower funding level.

We sent the CN to the Hill not long before Mr Pack arrived and in the days after his arrival there was a great deal of press regarding the firing of all of the network heads. The Senate was concerned and took the opportunity to put a hold on the funds to force a conversation on a number of issues regarding our strategy and execution. The hold is from Paul Grove from Sen. Graham's staff and Tim Reiser from Sen. Leahy's staff.

We've known about the hold for about a month but we've not set up a meeting between Mr Pack and the appropriators. The problem for us is that we needed to move the funds this week to ensure payroll and contracts are funded at OCB. This puts us in the unfortunate place of disregarding the Senate's hold on the funds. We know they will be very upset with this and I've been flagging it for Andre who has been flagging it for Diane for some time. That said, we don't want to commit an anti-deficiency act violation by spending money we don't have, and we also don't want to layoff contractors and furlough federal staff to try and keep operating at a greatly reduced funding level.

At any rate, I sent Andre the bullets below on the items that I think the Senate will want to hear about when we finally engage them. I thought I would flag for you too since GC will probably get dragged into this if the appropriators contend that we are violating congressional notice provisions in the appropriations bill. Very strictly the requirement is for congressional "notification" not congressional "approval"; and we have OMB's blessing to move the funds already.

Below are the thoughts I provided related to finance, operations, and the eventual meeting with the Senate appropriators to free up the OCB money. I think the Hill's concerns are not OCB-specific in most cases and are fairly obvious concerns, same as mine and likely leadership's, so easy to enumerate. I think most of the issues are the broad subjects below. I know Andre is thinking about this and I will flag for Diane too. Neither of them may have the answers to respond fully to the Senate, but perhaps between Diane, Emily, Jonathan, and Mr Pack, the blanks can be filled in to help address the concerns and prep for the meeting with the Senate to lift the Hold. We should probably be prepared for the heavy set of questions below and GC will surely get pulled into the discussion at some point. List of issues/concerns:

—Explanation for the mass firings of the network heads and the general strategy going forward. (Also the recent firing of Bay Fang).

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—The impact of the continuing freeze on contracting actions, personnel actions, and technical migrations (particularly on the federal side, but also during the time the freeze applied to the grantees). Impacts on health and safety related to covid or otherwise.

—Ability to obligate/spend out funds in accordance with the approved Program Plan.

—Governance issues at USAGM including violations of the firewall, such as the removal of Steve Springer as standards editor of VOA; the makeup of the grantee boards, etc.

—The status of the lawsuit with the Open Technology Fund and the qualifications of the Acting CEO at this boutique organization.

—The current status of OTF's grant agreement and various work they fund, including impacts on human rights activists, journalists/sources worldwide, and including protesters in Hong Kong. (The July funding still has not gone out).

—The status of the J-1 visas; threats to journalists who may need to return home; impact on operations; and the reasons for conducting the reviews.

Thanks much. A lawyer's job is never done it seems. cc'ing Dave too for his awareness. Thanks much!

Grant

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From: Grant Turner <GTurner@usagm.gov>
 Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 7:14 PM
 To: Diane Cullo
 Subject: OCB CN and Senate "hold" on USAGM funds

Hi Diane,

I thought I would check in with you on the OCB CN and the potential for lifting the Hold from the Senate. As I mentioned in a previous email, we had to begin moving some funds this week. The appropriators won't like that but we did give them the required notice (and we have OMB's blessing to move the funds via their apportionment).

At any rate, I know there are many issues you are juggling, but I sent Andre the bullets below on the items that I think the Senate will want to hear about when we finally engage them. I thought I would flag for you too so you will have a starting point for crafting any talking points and a strategy for resolution with the Hill. Below are the thoughts I provided related to finance, operations, and the eventual Senate meeting. I think the Hill's concerns are not OCB-specific in most cases and are fairly obvious concerns, same as mine and likely leadership's, so easy to enumerate. I think most of the issues are the broad subjects below. I know Andre is thinking about this, too. Neither of you may have the answers to respond fully to the Senate, but perhaps with Emily, Jonathan, Mora, and Mr Pack, the blanks can be filled in to help address the concerns and lift the Hold. We should probably be prepared for the heavy set of questions below which Paul Grove and Tim Reiser will certainly push on. List of issues/concerns:

—Explanation for the mass firings of the network heads and the general strategy going forward. (Also the recent firing of Bay Fang).

—The impact of the continuing freeze on contracting actions, personnel actions, and technical migrations (particularly on the federal side, but also during the time the freeze applied to the grantees). Impacts on health and safety related to covid or otherwise.

—Ability to obligate/spend out funds in accordance with the approved Program Plan.

—Governance issues at USAGM including violations of the firewall, such as the removal of Steve Springer as standards editor of VOA; the makeup of the grantee boards, etc.

—The status of the lawsuit with the Open Technology Fund and the qualifications of the Acting CEO at this boutique organization.

—The current status of OTF's grant agreement and various work they fund, including impacts on human rights activists, journalists/sources worldwide, and including protesters in Hong Kong. (The July funding still has not gone out).

—The status of the J-1 visas; threats to journalists who may need to return home; impact on operations; and the reasons for conducting the reviews.

If anything else comes up, I will flag. While we have the appropriators in a meeting, it would be great to try and see where they are at in terms of FY 21 funding. The House, of course, had a big cut for us. If we don't engage SACFO soon they may also write a tough set of numbers for us.

Best,

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Grant

From: Nat Kretchun <nat@opentech.fund>
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 2:39:28 PM
To: Chad Hurley <churley@usagm.gov>; Shawn Powers <spowers@usagm.gov>
Cc: Matthew Baise <mbaise@voanews.com>; Grant Turner <GTurner@usagm.gov>; Heidi Pilloud <heidi@opentech.fund>
Subject: Psiphon notification

Dear Shawn and Chad,

As you know, USAGM is currently holding approximately \$20m in funds allocated for OTF per USAGM's Congressionally-approved FY19 and FY20 Internet Freedom Spend Plans, including the funds corresponding to existing OTF obligations inherited from RFA. If funds are not transferred in the near future, OTF will run out of available bank balance in September..

Given the urgency of this situation, we are now at the point that we are contractually obligated to notify several of our projects that we will be forced to terminate their contracts. In particular, we wanted to make you aware that our contract with Psiphon requires that we give 45 days notice in the case of a termination. Therefore we must give Psiphon notice of termination now. Similarly, we will provide termination notices to other projects according to the termination clause in their contracts.

While we are contractually obligated to notify Psiphon of our need to terminate their contract, we would sincerely like to avoid this outcome. We know how vital Psiphon's services are to USAGM ability to reach its audiences in censored areas, but we simply have no choice if we do not receive our grant funds from USAGM.

Best,
nat

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From: Grant Turner <GTurner@usagm.gov>
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 2:52 PM
To: Morvared Namdarkhan; Diane Cullo; Emily Pauline Newman; Andre Mendes
Cc: David Kligerman
Subject: Fwd: Psiphon notification

Just got this and wanted to flag for everyone immediately. See below. Very important potential funding and contract lapse here. Psiphon is critical to our ability to reach key markets, notably Iran. We cannot let these lapse. The funding slowdowns are one of the things I flagged in earlier emails. We simply cannot sit on these the length of time we have without these sorts of rolling impacts. Please let me know how I can help. I can ask the grants team to be ready over the weekend to work on any packages that are needed (if they are contactable—some are off duty for the day now).

Grant

From: Grant Turner <GTurner@usagm.gov>
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 2:47 PM
To: Nat Kretchun; Chad Hurley; Shawn Powers
Cc: Matthew Baise; Heidi Pilloud
Subject: Re: Psiphon notification

Hi Nat,

Thank you for cc'ing me. This is an enormous potential funding issue for us. Naturally, Psiphon is critical in some key markets, notably Iran. I will see what can be done to free up funding very soon!

Best,

Grant

EXHIBIT 2

House Foreign Affairs Committee
September 24, 2020 Hearing
"Oversight of the United States Agency for Global Media and U.S. International Broadcasting Efforts"
Written Testimony of Grant K. Turner

EXHIBIT 2

From: Morvared Namdarkhan <MNamdarkhan@usagm.gov>
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 5:25 PM
To: Grant Turner; Diane Cullo; Emily Pauline Newman; Andre Mendes; Jim Miles
Cc: David Kligerman
Subject: Re: Psiphon notification

Hi Grant,

As you know, CEO Pack has appointed James Miles Acting CEO of OTF, an action confirmed by Judge Howell's ruling of July 2, 2020. Mr. Kretchun and the rest of OTF staff must coordinate their activities with Mr. Miles to ensure nothing falls through the cracks.

Best,

Mora Namdar

EXHIBIT 2

House Foreign Affairs Committee
September 24, 2020 Hearing
"Oversight of the United States Agency for Global Media and U.S. International Broadcasting Efforts"
Written Testimony of Grant K. Turner

EXHIBIT 2

From: Grant Turner <GTurner@usagm.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:40 PM
To: Morvared Namdarkhan; Andre Mendes
Cc: Emily Pauline Newman
Subject: Re: OTF July amount?

Hi Mora,

Okay, got it, will let our team know now. And we will provide our OTF contacts your name and email address and let them know communications should flow through you.

Best,
Grant

From: Morvared Namdarkhan <MNamdarkhan@usagm.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:33:34 PM
To: Grant Turner <GTurner@usagm.gov>; Andre Mendes <amendes@usagm.gov>
Cc: Emily Pauline Newman <ENewman@usagm.gov>
Subject: RE: OTF July amount?

Hi Grant,

Your point is taken and if I need any support, I will be sure to reach out. But, as stated, and in consultation with the CEO and his COS, this is the route we want to take. Any and all communication with any OTF employees or personnel must go through me. Please let me know when you have relayed this instruction.

Thanks,

Mora

EXHIBIT 2

House Foreign Affairs Committee
September 24, 2020 Hearing
"Oversight of the United States Agency for Global Media and U.S. International Broadcasting Efforts"
Written Testimony of Grant K. Turner

EXHIBIT 2

From: Grant Turner <GTurner@usagm.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:52 AM
To: Morvared Namdarkhan <MNamdarkhan@usagm.gov>; Andre Mendes <amendes@usagm.gov>
Cc: Emily Pauline Newman <ENewman@usagm.gov>
Subject: Re: OTF July amount?

Hi Mora,

Your request might be a bit impractical. We have frequent contact with all of our grantees at a staff level on a daily or weekly basis (on rather mundane but important operational issues). Elements of the federal oversight of this organization and its finances occur through the OCFO grants team and you may not have the requisite grants training or financial training to be the sole interlocutor for those purposes. Some days can be very quiet in working with them but other days are quite busy. I would advise against this, but completely defer to you and Andre and Mr Pack on how you want to do this.

I'm not sure how many emails my team may have exchanged with OTF. That could take a bit of time to assemble and we don't want to devote all that team's time exclusively to gathering emails versus all the other elements of their grants management functions. I will poll them to see what is possible. Thanks!

Grant

EXHIBIT 2

House Foreign Affairs Committee
September 24, 2020 Hearing
"Oversight of the United States Agency for Global Media and U.S. International Broadcasting Efforts"
Written Testimony of Grant K. Turner

EXHIBIT 2

From: Morvared Namdarkhan <MNamdarkhan@usagm.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:04:26 AM
To: Grant Turner <GTurner@usagm.gov>; Andre Mendes <amendes@usagm.gov>
Cc: Emily Pauline Newman <ENewman@usagm.gov>
Subject: RE: OTF July amount?

Hi Grant and Andre,

Please do not take any further action regarding OTF or reaching out to Mr. Miles or anyone else with regard to OTF. As I asked yesterday, please be sure to forward me all communication including but not limited to emails, requests, etc...from OTF employees or advocates for the last 4 months. I need all of that sent to me by COB today.

Also, please direct all OTF employees and interested parties to communicate only with me at this time. No one else from USAGM is to be in contact with anyone at OTF.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

Mora

EXHIBIT 2

House Foreign Affairs Committee
September 24, 2020 Hearing
"Oversight of the United States Agency for Global Media and U.S. International Broadcasting Efforts"
Written Testimony of Grant K. Turner

EXHIBIT 2

From: Yahoo <grantkturner@yahoo.com>
Date: August 13, 2020 at 9:21:33 AM EDT
To: Grant Turner <Grantkturner@yahoo.com>, Grant Turner <grantkturner@gmail.com>
Subject: Memo to self on work issues

On approximately August 12, 2020, I had a call with Andre Mendes, USAGM's new Chief Operating Officer, who I report to. Andre asked me to call him at 9:05 AM and during the call he said that Mora Namdar (Mortaved Namdarkhan) was angered by an email I sent him and which he forwarded to her regarding financial management processes. The email I sent advised Andre that it was surprising that Mora had ordered our grantees to return money without the involvement of the CFO's office. Morehead advised radio free Asia, the Middle East broadcasting networks, and radio free Europe to return Internet freedom money they had been provided during FY 2019. As a result radio free Asia had delivered a paper check for \$2.9 million, the Middle East broadcasting networks had delivered a paper check for \$500,000, and radio free Europe was in the process of produce what I expected to be a paper check for what I learned later would be around \$144,000. I also pointed out that these instructions are being delivered outside of our normal financial internal controls and could create problems, and likely would, with our financial auditors. The money Mora and the new CEO Mr Pack had asked to be returned by our grantees, related to Internet freedom funding, and I said the money would not be available without a number of procedural steps being completed. I was advising Andre of this because it appeared that they wanted access to the money very quickly. First, I said the CFO's office would need to research if the money was actually funding we could recapture after being obligated and disbursed. This would involve OGC. Because the funding is what is referred to as "no-year money", which does not expire, I told Andre I believed it could be recaptured ultimately, but would need to research to confirm. If it was able to be recaptured, The paper check would need to be deposited with the treasury, and handling paper checks might take additional time due to the COVID-19 situation since people at treasury may not be available or as responsive. The funds would also need to be "reapportioned" by OMB to be available to us, which would be another delay. Finally, it would require a congressional notification and a 15 day waiting period to be transferred within the agency and available for obligation again.

Andre said that Mora was incensed by this and said "Grant just needs to do his fucking job!" Her response revealed how little she knew about normal federal financial management processes.

Andre also implied that this was a threat from her to me and he did not take it lightly. He said that he believed Mora was doing a character assassination of me and also of him, attacking us at every opportunity to diminish us with the new CEO and the other people in the leadership team.

Related to this, and another issue for documentation, at a meeting two weeks earlier, on approximately July 30th, I met with the new CEO, the Chief Operating Officer Andre, the chief of staff Emily Newman, and Diane Cullo the deputy chief of staff. At the meeting, I pointed out to the new CEO that people in his new leadership team— notably Diane Cullo and Emily Newman, who were in attendance, and also Mora Namdar —were causing significant delays on a variety of contracting, personnel, and operational activities within the agency. I pointed out that these were extremely detrimental to the function of the agency and greatly impaired our mission. I noted that things are being submitted to the front office and just sitting for weeks at a time with no apparent action. Whether it's a contract to buy toilet paper at our Thailand facility or a cleaning contract (during a pandemic no less) at our Kuwait transmission facility, few things have any urgency and few things seem to get approved on a timely basis. I pointed out that the Middle East Broadcasting Networks, our Arabic language grantee, had not received money for operations since April. I pointed out that our Open Technology Fund grantee, who maintains critical Internet firewall circumvention tools and privacy tools, had not received millions of dollars of prior year money or it's July tranche of funding for fy20, even though we had assured the court at the beginning of the month that we

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EXHIBIT 2

would disperse this July funding on a timely basis. I said I had provided an affidavit to assist the agency in explaining that monthly disbursements are not unusual, and that this affidavit had helped the agency prevail in court. However, I said I now felt we had lied to the court and that I was used to mislead the court because we were at the end of the month and had not provided the funding yet. I also said that this was not how we would deal with the grantees and their funding issues. We work with them very closely to make sure they don't have disruptions in their funding and operations. I pointed out that in the prior month things had gotten so bad at Radio Free Europe that their CFO Mark Kantos had called me to say "Grant, if you don't get me money by next week, I won't be able to meet payroll".

I said these things are simply unacceptable and are destroying the ability of the agency to operate. I pointed out that the lack of funding to our open technology fund is requiring them to not find Critical tools used by our audiences worldwide. For instance, OTF was not going to be able to fund Psiphon, a tool used by 84% of our Iranian audience to access our content. It is used by 40% of our Mandarin speaking China audience to access our content. It is used in Pakistan and Venezuela, key markets that are important to our mission. I raise these issues and nobody seems to care, or act with urgency, or want to preserve our investments and our mission.

Some of this information seemed to be new to Mr Pack, and it certainly didn't make his team look very good and likely made them recognize I would be an obstacle to their mismanagement or ill intentions if I remained in place.

Grant Tumer 8:54 AM August 13, 2020.

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"Oversight of the United States Agency for Global Media and U.S. International Broadcasting Efforts"
Written Testimony of Grant K. Tumer

TESTIMONY OF RYAN CROCKER BEFORE THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, SEPTEMBER 24

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member McCaul,

It is an honor to appear before this Committee to discuss the roles and missions for the United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM). These are critical times for our country in the International arena, and USAGM plays a critical role.

I was privileged to serve on the Board of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (later USAGM) from 2013 to 2020. It was a bipartisan board, although my status is as an independent. This was a period in which the Board Chair was first a Democrat and then a Republican. It was also a period of historic change. Since its inception, the BBG had not had a CEO. Our board recognized this as a major structural flaw: One does not run an \$800 million corporation with no CEO and a part time. After verifying that there were no legal barriers to the establishment of a CEO position by the Board, we engaged members of the Senate and House to explain the issue and seek support for creating and filling a CEO slot. We found broad bipartisan backing. After a rigorous search led by then Board Chairman Jeff Shell, we selected John Lansing, a career journalist of extraordinary ability and accomplishment. He is also an extraordinary manager. He reviewed the entire USAGM structure, identifying problems and proposing solutions. He dramatically improved coordination and cooperation among the entities and agencies, eliminating redundancies and building a strong sense of common purpose that not only realized more efficient use of resources, but improved the quality of our output. Congress remained engaged on the issue, and passed legislation establishing a CEO position that would be nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member McCaul, the most important asset USAGM has is the people who work for its cause, from reporters around the world who have the ability and courage to report the news accurately and honestly. In many cases, they do so at great personal risk of harassment, imprisonment, physical abuse and even death – all for telling the truth in an arena of totalitarian lies. This is at the core of the USAGM mission, and has been since the founding of VOA during the darker days of WW II. It also means finding the very best people for senior positions whose values and abilities are consistent with that mission and who will inspire and lead their agencies and entities. That effort became easier with John Lansing at the helm. Admired and respected throughout the media, he in turn attracted the best and the brightest. It made our job as a Board considerably easier. I can say with a total lack of modesty that we fielded the A Team. Two of its members sit before you – Amanda Bennett who headed VOA and Jamie Fly, former CEO of RFE/RL. They can tell you their stories. Suffice it for me to say that you simply cannot find more capable and dedicated leaders. And it should not surprise you to know that they worked closely with each other. The best gravitate to the best. Among the leaders who are not here is Alberto Fernandez who headed the Middle East Broadcasting Network – MBN. A former Foreign Service colleague. Alberto speaks nearly perfect Arabic. Good enough to go on Arabic language news programs where he would out think, out talk and when necessary out shout political adversaries in their own language. He also has the moral courage to shine light on the most sensitive issues in the region such as corruption. The same is true of Libby Liu and later Bay Fang as CEOs of Radio Free Asia. You will not find more informed and vociferous critics of the Chinese government anywhere. Libby also worked to establish the Overseas Technology Fund (OTF) with the mission of circumventing the efforts of

autocratic regimes such as China to block the broadcast of the truth. Ambassador Kornbluh will be speaking to that as Chairman of the OTF Board of Directors.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member McCaul, I think it is very important to note not just who we selected for these critical positions, but how. These hiring decisions were made by unanimous votes of the Board. Democrats and Republicans came together to decide who could best serve USAGM and the nation. There were no partisan votes. This is a matter of great importance to me personally. As a Foreign Service officer, I served six times as an American Ambassador abroad. Three times I represented Republican Administrations, and three times Democratic. I served the American people, not a political party. Even in this time of hyper-partisanship, the USAGM Board on which I was privileged to serve was able to maintain its focus on the national security interests of the United States and to act accordingly, getting the right people in the right places and insuring that the mission of the agency was properly and effectively implemented.

That Board was dissolved in June, in accordance with the legislation establishing a Presidentially nominated and Senate confirmed CEO position. We expected this. What we did not expect was the wholesale firing of the agency and entity heads we had worked so hard to identify and recruit. Nor did we expect that the Agency's career executives would be dismissed or sidelined. CEO Pack's actions have demoralized Agency staff, most critically our reporters in the field. The firewall, which has been the guarantor of objective and honest reporting for more than 75 years, is under attack. We are in danger, I believe, of seeing USAGM transformed into precisely the propaganda mouthpiece we have so vigorously condemned in places like China and Russia.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member McCaul, I cannot say it better than William Harlan Hale did in that first VOA broadcast in February 1942. Speaking in German and aiming to counter Nazi propaganda, he said this: "Here speaks a voice from America. Every day at this time, we will bring you the news of the war. The news may be good. The news may be bad. We shall tell you the truth." And that is what VOA and its sister agencies have done ever since. Our reputation for telling the truth has been a core element of our strength as a nation. Now it is in danger, putting at risk not only our national values but also our national security.

Thank you.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much for that testimony. Very important and we appreciate it.

Ambassador Kornbluh.

STATEMENT OF KAREN KORNBLUH, CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OPEN TECHNOLOGY FUND

Ms. KORNBLUH. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, and members of the committee for holding this hearing and for receiving my testimony. I am privileged to serve as chair of the board of the—sorry—chair of the board of directors of the Open Technology Fund, and I am here today representing that bipartisan expert board.

I have worked at the intersection of democracy, technology, and independent media for many years, currently at the German Marshall Fund. Previously, I served, as you mentioned, as U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development where I negotiated on behalf of the U.S. the first global internet policymaking principles. You have invited me here today to discuss the challenges posed by USAGM's new leadership to the Open Technology Fund and thereby to America's internet freedom efforts abroad.

OTF is a bipartisan American success story. It is absolutely critical to U.S. efforts to combat the rise of digital authoritarianism. But, unfortunately, the Agency has defunded and is now disparaging this small but crucial organization, undermining both USAGM's mission and the cause of internet freedom at a time when they are needed most.

As you know, the internet is a vital information lifeline for billions worldwide including USAGM's audience of over 345 million people. Authoritarians increasingly strive to sever this lifeline. Over two-thirds of the world's population live in a country where the internet is censored. OTF was created precisely to respond to this threat and has done so through a considered, multipronged approach.

OTF has directly funded more than a hundred internet freedom technologies used by over two billion people globally, including both circumvention tools such as those that enable tens of millions of users in China and Iran to avoid censorship, and secure anti-surveillance technologies such as those relied on by journalists and democracy activists in Hong Kong and Belarus.

In addition, OTF has fostered a global community of technologists, digital security experts, journalists, and human rights defenders advancing internet freedom. By connecting these groups and individuals, OTF has helped to grow the community to thousands around the world. Research efforts funded by OTF have also been essential to exposing aggressive new threats in places like Xinjiang and developing next generation solutions including, for example, AI-powered circumvention techniques.

OTF has funded security audits that have exposed and patched over 2,000 vulnerabilities and supported the translation of freedom technologies into more than 200 languages. Through this rich, multipronged strategy, OTF has not only supported the development of the world's leading technologies, but has also empowered millions of people living in censored countries to access USAGM

content and other sources of independent news and information online.

Both Congress and the U.S. Department of State have recognized that OTF has become a critical bulwark against rising digital authoritarianism. Yet in June, Mr. Pack attempted to fire OTF's expert leadership and remove its independent, bipartisan board of directors. Those moves were, thankfully, blocked by a unanimous decision of the DC Circuit Court of Appeals.

In addition, USAGM representatives have leveled a variety of accusations the organization has repeatedly refuted providing over 200 pages of information and documentation and offering numerous times to undergo additional independent financial audits. We have offered a GAO assessment and/or an OIG investigation, but USAGM has refused making it clear that the goal is not to resolve evidence-based concerns but, rather, to discredit OTF.

More devastating, the Agency continues to withhold nearly 20 million in congressionally allocated funds, forcing OTF to halt 49 out of its 60, or 80 percent, of its ongoing internet freedom programs. This has meant leaving journalists, human rights defenders, and activists around the world without the tools they need. In just 4 months, the world's leading funder of internet freedom technologies, OTF, has been dismantled and U.S. internet freedom and democracy efforts around the globe have been crippled.

Authoritarian regimes have made it abundantly clear that they are willing to do and spend what it takes to extend their control over the internet. From Xinjiang to Tehran to Minsk, repressive regimes are deploying a new generation of advanced technology designed to stifle dissent, track minorities, and manipulate content online. And while these were once the tactics of a few rogue regimes, they are now a global threat with governments around the world investing billions of dollars in the latest censorship and surveillance systems each year.

The United States has and should continue to confront these threats head-on in an effort to preserve the internet as democratic space for free expression. Instead, recent actions have undermined critical U.S. foreign policy and national security priorities and imperiled the lives of millions of journalists, activists, and human rights defenders by leaving them vulnerable around the world.

For the U.S. Government to maintain its role as a global leader on internet freedom at this critical moment in history, it is urgent that it restore OTF's funding and recommit to its important work. I thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Kornbluh follows:]

**Written testimony of Ambassador Karen Kornbluh
Chair of the Board of Directors, Open Technology Fund
Before the House Committee of Foreign Affairs
September 24, 2020**

Thank you, Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, and members of the Committee for holding this hearing and receiving my testimony.

I am the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Open Technology Fund and am here representing that bipartisan, expert board. I have worked at the intersection of democracy, technology, and independent media for many years and currently lead the Digital Innovation and Democracy Initiative at the German Marshall Fund. Previously, I served as U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, where I negotiated the first global Internet Policymaking Principles.

I have been invited here today to discuss the challenges posed by USAGM's new leadership to the Open Technology Fund and thereby to America's internet freedom efforts abroad.

Since Michael Pack was confirmed as CEO of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, the agency has defunded and is now disparaging one of its most valuable assets - the Open Technology Fund. These actions undermine both USAGM's mission and the cause of internet freedom at a time when they are needed most.

The internet is a vital information lifeline for billions worldwide, including USAGM's audience of over 345 million people, and particularly in countries where traditional print and broadcast media are controlled by state authorities. Authoritarians strive to sever this lifeline. Over two thirds of the world's population live in a country where the internet is censored.

The Open Technology Fund was created precisely to counter censorship and surveillance in the world's most repressive countries. Since its creation, OTF has supported the development of the world's leading circumvention and secure communication technologies, successfully enabling millions of people living in censored countries to access USAGM content and other sources of independent news and information online.

Until recently, OTF was the world's leading funder of internet freedom technologies pursuing a multi-faceted strategy:

- OTF has directly funded more than **100 internet freedom technologies**. Today, those technologies are used by over 2 billion people globally, including circumvention tools that support tens of millions of users in China and Iran, and secure communication technologies relied on by journalists and democracy activists in Hong Kong and Belarus.
- In addition, OTF has **fostered a global community** of technologists, digital security experts, journalists, and human rights defenders advancing internet freedom. By connecting these groups and individuals, in part through global meetings and

workshops, OTF has help to grow the community from several dozen organizations to thousands of groups and individuals around the world.

- **Research efforts** funded by OTF have been essential to exposing aggressive new censorship and surveillance threats in places like Xinjiang and developing next generation solutions, including AI-powered circumvention techniques.
- OTF has funded **security audits** that have exposed and patched over 2,000 vulnerabilities and **supported the translation of internet freedom technologies** into more than 200 languages, ensuring OTF funds not only the most effective technologies, but tools that are secure, resilient, and accessible to users around the world.

Both Congress and the U.S. Department of State have recognized OTF is a critical bulwark against rising digital authoritarianism and essential to America's efforts to advance internet freedom globally -- as have thousands of independent media outlets, human rights defenders, and civil society organizations. By all accounts, OTF is a remarkable American success story.

Yet in June, Mr. Pack attempted to fire OTF's expert leadership and remove its independent bipartisan Board of Directors. Those moves were temporarily blocked by a unanimous decision of the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals.

In addition, USAGM representatives have leveled a variety of accusations against OTF which the organization has repeatedly refuted, providing USAGM over 200 pages of information and documentation and offering numerous times in writing to undergo additional independent financial audits, a GAO assessment, and/or an OIG investigation. USAGM has refused, making it clear that the goal is not to resolve evidence-based concerns, but rather to discredit this effective bipartisan success story.

More devastating, the agency continues to withhold nearly \$20 million in Congressionally allocated funds from OTF -- forcing the organization to halt 49 out of its 60 - or 80 percent - of its ongoing internet freedom programs, leaving journalists, human rights defenders, and activists around the world without the tools and technologies they need to face escalating censorship and oppression. In just four months, the world's leading funder of internet freedom technologies has been dismantled and U.S. internet freedom and democracy efforts around the globe have been crippled.

Authoritarian regimes have made it abundantly clear that they are willing to do and spend whatever it takes to extend their control over the internet. From Xinjiang to Tehran to Minsk, repressive regimes are deploying a new generation of advanced censorship and surveillance technology, designed to stifle dissent, track minorities, and manipulate content online. While these were once the tactics of a few rogue regimes, they are now a global threat - with governments around the world investing billions of dollars in the latest censorship and surveillance systems each year.

The United States should confront these threats head on in an effort to preserve the internet as democratic space for free expression. Instead, the recent actions have played directly into the

hands of despots and dictators. They have undermined critical U.S. foreign policy and national security priorities, and imperiled the lives of millions of journalists, activists, and human rights defenders around the world.

For the United States Government to maintain its role as a global leader on internet freedom, at this critical moment in history, it is urgent that it restore OTF's funding and recommit to its important work.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much for your testimony.
We now go to Ms. Bennett.

**STATEMENT OF AMANDA BENNETT, FORMER DIRECTOR OF
THE VOICE OF AMERICA**

Ms. BENNETT. Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, committee members, thank you. I am Amanda Bennett, the former director of Voice of America, and I have had the privilege of interacting with many of you on this committee on both sides of the aisle. I have found you sometimes critical, sometimes complimentary, but always supportive and understanding of our mission.

I am here because I care deeply about our country's institutions, most importantly the institution of the free press and our First Amendment. As a result of this, I have come to care deeply about VOA and its missions which embody those values around the world. Although unlike some others here I have not been involved in USAGM since my departure, I welcome the opportunity to use my expertise and experience to talk about the fact that I think is most important to the success of VOA and USAGM which is the legislative firewall that protects the journalists' independence.

And while I speak of VOA, the institution for which I am most familiar, everything I say applies equally to USAGM and the rest of the entities. They operate under exactly the same legislation and practices and customs. I believe my journalistic career sets me up perfectly to talk about this legislative separation. My career spans nearly 50 years, all but the previous four in private industry.

Beginning as a student at Harvard Crimson, I then spent 23 years at the Wall Street Journal where I was their second Beijing correspondent. I have held senior positions including top editor positions at four other leading news organizations. I am a two-time Pulitzer Prize recipient and I have served for nearly a decade on the board that awards those prizes. Therefore, I think I can say that I have wide experience with which the legislation regarding the U.S. Agency for Global Media calls the highest standards of professional journalism.

VOA is America's largest international broadcaster, a hundred percent government-funded but, by law, operationally independent. VOA distributes news and information by radio, television, and digital in 47 languages to over 60 countries. In most of VOA's markets, VOA is the only source of critical news. Journalism is at the heart of USAGM's mission, with the word "journalism" embedded for decades throughout the governing laws and regulations.

Unlike other government messaging operations, we do not message. We provide useful, credible, and independent news and information. The single most important factor in that effectiveness is the editorial separation between news and any outside interference. This separation is known informally as the "firewall," and is made up over decades with laws, regulations, and common practices.

The very fact that our news is provided outside the control of any party and power gives VOA its own power, and audiences around the world see and appreciate the credible information VOA provides. Around the world in the markets that VOA surveys, it enjoys

60 to 80 percent credibility ratings even, as Mr. Turner remarked, even in countries like Iran that are considered hostile to America.

And this legal separation is the single most important thing that distinguishes government-funded, independent news from the propaganda that many of our authoritarian regimes that we covered practice. Under the protection of the firewall, VOA over the previous 4 years refocused on its mission as the free press to the world. It refocused on its charter mandate to represent all and not just some Americans. It increased resources devoted not just to Washington but to the center of the country.

In telling America's story, VOA reported proudly on the things that America excels at and that much of the world wants to know about—technology, entrepreneurship, medical advances and research, education, and philanthropy—while at the same time reporting, unflinchingly, on failings like school shootings and racial tension. We also provided panels of global medical experts on COVID-19, giving information much needed in places that had no other access to it.

Combating bias in journalism is a critical task and especially so in today's polarized environment. VOA made bias training mandatory and through regular communication made eliminating bias a priority. VOA was tough on ethics violations, on internal corruption, and on inappropriate use of social media. VOA's leaders were transparent and forthcoming in these matters and outsiders knew of these actions immediately because VOA disclosed them immediately.

In addition, VOA extended its original mission of bringing news and information to those most isolated by launching broadcasting into refugee camps and dramatically increasing focus on women in the world. The team also moved VOA decisively into the digital space where its audience's attention was rapidly moving. One success in particular bears noting.

Morale, for which the Agency had been rightfully criticized, rose steadily during those 4 years, with overall employee satisfaction jumping from 47 percent in 2016 to over 70 percent in 2020, using a survey that replicated the usual methods and questions. This is proof that the power of the mission works. Morale improves when you treat people with respect, support a mission with a high and inspirational purpose, set high ethical standards, and enforce them rigorously but fairly.

People want the organization to perform in the way it is intended to perform and to accomplish the mission it is tasked with accomplishing. I want nothing but success for VOA, all of the entities, and the USAGM. When the organization runs smoothly under the protection of this firewall and operates proudly regardless of whatever party is in charge of the government as has been the case for decades, it will be yet another testament to the strength and power of the institution and of the free press.

I encourage everyone to please respect and strengthen, if possible, the firewall that makes this all possible. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Bennett follows:]

House Foreign Affairs Committee

September 22, 2020 Hearing

“Oversight of the United States Agency for Global Media and U.S. International Broadcasting Efforts”

Testimony of Amanda Bennett

Former Director of the Voice of America

Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, and members of the committee. Thank you for allowing me to testify today.

My name is Amanda Bennett. I am the former director of the Voice of America (VOA). My journalism career spans nearly 50 years, all but the previous four in private industry. I was a reporter at the *Wall Street Journal* for 23 years. I was their second Beijing correspondent. I held senior positions, including top editor, at four other leading U.S. news organizations. I am also a two-time Pulitzer prize recipient and served for nearly a decade on the board that awards those prizes.

I am here today to testify about the media organizations I have grown to love and respect: VOA, Radio Free Europe/Radio Free Liberty, Radio Free Asia, the Office of Cuba Broadcasting, Middle East Broadcast Networks and the Open Technology Fund. All are now overseen or funded by the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM).

Of course, I know best the work of VOA –its dedicated, selfless and courageous staff – where I proudly served as the 29th Director from 2016 until June 2020. But all operate under the same ethics and standards. By law and custom they practice what the law enshrining the Firewall protecting journalists and editors from outside interference calls “the highest standards of professional journalism.”

We Are Journalists

VOA is America’s largest international broadcaster, 100% government-funded but by law operationally independent. Now over 75 years old, VOA distributes news and information by radio, television and digital in 47 languages across the globe. Through Radio, television, mobile and the Internet it reaches over 280 million people weekly. In many of the countries it reaches, VOA is the only source of credible news.

Journalism is at the heart of the USAGM mission, “to inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy,” and the missions of VOA and the other networks. It has been and is embedded throughout their Charters. Other US information organizations, like the State Department’s Global Engagement Center, carry out the business of messaging to directly influence foreign public opinion.

VOA and its fellow organizations are different. They combat global misinformation, propaganda and false narratives by using America's own strengths, particularly its free press. The very ability to use a free and independent press to report and explain America tells the world more than words and images alone could do. The value of independent journalism is far better than messaging and great journalism is great public diplomacy. VOA exports to the world the First Amendment, guaranteeing free speech. In our polarized political and media environment, VOA reporters and editors work every day to claim the broad middle ground, exactly as VOA's Charter – signed by President Ford -- envisions.

We Depend on the Statutory Firewall

The single most important factor in our effectiveness is the separation between our newsrooms and policy makers and political influencers. We call this separation the Firewall. By law and regulation, *any* Executive branch employee outside the newsroom unlawfully breaches the Firewall when the employee "attempts to direct, pressure, coerce, threaten, interfere with, or otherwise impermissibly influence any of the USAGM networks, including their leadership, officers, employees, or staff, in the performance of their journalistic and broadcasting duties and activities."

The fact that news is provided outside of the control of the political party in power gives VOA its power. Audiences around the world see and appreciate the credible information VOA provides. We know from the world markets VOA surveys that it enjoys 60 to 80 percent credibility ratings -- even in countries like Iran considered hostile to America.

During my service as Director, I depended on the protection of the Firewall to refocus VOA's mission to be the free press to the world. We covered all -- not just some -- Americans. We increased coverage of news stories originating across the nation. Much of the world is interested about all of America. VOA reported proudly on all the things that America excels at -- technology, entrepreneurship, medical advances and research, education, and philanthropy while at the same time reporting, unflinchingly, on unpleasant news like school shootings and racial tension.

We Succeeded

On my watch, we held ourselves to the highest standards. Combating bias in journalism is a critical task, especially in today's polarized environment. VOA made bias training mandatory and through regular communication made eliminating bias a priority. VOA was tough on ethics violations, on internal corruption and on inappropriate use of social media. VOA leaders were transparent and forthcoming in these matters - outsiders knew of these actions immediately because VOA disclosed them immediately.

Moreover, VOA extended its original mission of bringing news and information to those most isolated by launching broadcasting into refugee camps, and dramatically increased focus on women in the world. The team moved VOA decisively into the digital space, where its audiences' attention was rapidly moving.

The objective results we achieved attest to what can be accomplished. Attached as an Exhibit is a May 2020 summary and employee survey documenting the successes achieved over the past four years. There are many. For instance, Morale, for which the agency had been rightfully criticized, rose steadily during those four years with overall satisfaction jumping from 47% in 2016 to over 70% in 2020.

Morale improved because people took their mission seriously and wanted only to have obstacles to achieving their mission removed or minimized. This was not just a feel-good exercise: it is proof of the power of the mission. Morale improves when you treat people with respect, support a mission with a high and inspirational purpose, set high ethical standards and enforce them rigorously but fairly. People want the organization to perform the way it is intended to perform and accomplish the mission it is tasked with accomplishing.

* * *

The fundamental factor in all this is the Firewall. A news organization tethered to the manners and mores of a political party will inevitably become what VOA has striven for decades to avoid: A propaganda machine, indistinguishable from those of the authoritarian regimes we cover.

I ask anyone who hears or reads this statement to do everything in his or her power to strengthen this Firewall. We must ensure that it is applied in reality and not just in words.

Thank you.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. Thank you very much, Ms. Bennett. We now go to Mr. Fly.

**STATEMENT OF JAMIE FLY, FORMER PRESIDENT OF RADIO
FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY**

Mr. FLY. Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, other members of the committee, I want to thank you for holding this hearing and inviting me to testify today. I am going to briefly summarize my written testimony.

I first want to associate myself with the testimony of my colleagues. We all had different vantage points during our time working together at USAGM, but I share the concerns they have expressed especially about the editorial independence of the networks and the brave journalists that work at all of our networks.

Until June of this year, I was honored to serve as president and CEO of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty which as we have discussed is a congressionally funded broadcaster reaching 38 million people across 23 countries in 27 languages. It is often referred to as RFE/RL which I will stick to to make this—let it go faster. RFE/RL and the other private entities that receive grants from USAGM provide objective news and information to audiences around the world and help citizens hold governments accountable for their actions.

You have heard a bit about my background. I have worked my entire career in national security and foreign policy. I have served in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, on the National Security Council staff of President George W. Bush. I was Marco Rubio's foreign policy advisor for 4 years in the U.S. Senate and also advised him during the 2016 Presidential campaign on foreign policy. In July 2019, the bipartisan USAGM board selected me to be RFE/RL's president and CEO for a period of 3 years.

I was drawn to this work at RFE/RL because I believe that given some trial information in our modern societies, it is more important than ever to the fate of democracies that we modernize the tools that helped win the cold war for this new digital age. As you know, RFE/RL was key to that cold war of success.

While I was president of RFE/RL, I worked to make the network more effective in addressing current and future challenges. When I arrived at the organization last summer, I found that constant leadership turnover had caused significant chaos and drift. Funding gaps were widespread, a roughly flat budget was increasingly allowing competitors to hire away staff and putting the network at a disadvantage in key markets.

Russia, which is our most significant competition across Eurasia, but then also others were outspending RFE/RL by several orders of magnitude. Morale across the organization was low. My team and I began quickly to try to make improvements that were fully supported by the organization's bipartisan corporate board at the time, which I should note included a representative of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

These changes were supported by USAGM leadership and I briefed these changes to Members of Congress and their staff, including some of you on this committee. After just 10 months as

president and despite a once-in-a-century pandemic that significantly impacted our operations, we were making real progress.

We increased RFE/RL's focus on digital platforms which experienced significant audience growth during the pandemic. We expanded investigative reporting and prioritized journalistic professionalism and training. We increased coverage of China's growing influence across Eurasia, and we developed new tools to combat disinformation. As I left, we were developing strategies to expand our audience inside Russia despite coming under significant pressure from the Kremlin. I also oversaw the preparations for RFE/RL's return to Hungary, which culminated 2 weeks ago in the launch of RFE/RL's new digital Hungarian service.

Finally, we worked to improve RFE/RL's security and countered attempts by foreign governments to threaten or pressure our employees. All of this work unexpectedly ended in mid-June, days after the Senate confirmed Michael Pack to be USAGM's chief executive officer. In the early hours of June 18th, in Prague, where RFE/RL is headquartered, I received an email informing me that I had been removed from my post without cause. This action occurred without a single conversation between me and Michael Pack after he took office, which my understanding was the same case with the other network heads that were removed.

I know that RFE/RL staff have subsequently reacted to my firing with shock, frustration, anger, and most concerning, uncertainty about RFE/RL's future. To date, more than 3 months later, no successors have been named to replace me or my counterparts at the other networks. Sadly, CEO Pack's arrival has brought only more chaos and uncertainty to U.S. international broadcasting. The turmoil cannot come at a worse time. To be blunt, I fear we are falling behind our competitors in the information space.

In a few short months, CEO Pack has put the Agency he oversees and the grantee networks he funds, including RFE/RL, at significant and potentially irreparable risk. In my written testimony, I outline several potential reforms to U.S. international broadcasting so that the U.S. can remain competitive in efforts to counter disinformation, support independent media, and strengthen democracies.

First, to do this Congress will need to increase funding for these tools of American soft power, but that obviously requires consistent, nonpartisan leadership of USAGM. But even beyond that, more significant actions will be required. Two I would like to highlight here are for Congress to pass a new international broadcasting act that would clarify the roles and responsibilities of the various networks and examine the question of how best to explain American foreign policy to foreign audiences which is at the heart of recent Trump Administration attacks on the Agency.

Second, as part of these reforms, I would urge Congress to make the private grantees, including RFE/RL, even more independent of the U.S. Government. Despite the firewall, their independence continues to be threatened. The independence of these networks and their journalists is essential to their credibility with their audiences. It is what attracts listeners, readers, and viewers to their content. It is what allows RFE/RL's brave and intrepid journalists to take risks on a daily basis to report the truth.

The politicization of USAGM and the undermining of the grantees' corporate boards by Mr. Pack are putting this credibility and their work at risk. I urge you to take action to ensure that this damage to these vital institutions does not go further. Thank you for your attention.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fly follows:]

No statement provided by press time.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much, Mr. Fly.

Now Ambassador Crocker is next, but he is having some technology issues so we are only going to hear his audio. But I am sure he has important things to tell us, so I now recognize you, Ambassador.

Ambassador Crocker.

STATEMENT OF RYAN CROCKER, BOARD MEMBER, OPEN TECHNOLOGY FUND

Mr. CROCKER. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member McCaul. Believe me, getting here this morning was not half the fun.

I served on the board of the Broadcasting Board of Governors from—and later USAGM—for almost 7 years from August 2013 until June 2020. During that period, I was privileged to witness a complete makeover of the USAGM program. When I came aboard, the BBG was essentially an entity that was running without a CEO. It was as though a part-time Board of Governors was managing by remote an \$800 million entity. It made no sense.

So one of the first steps we took was to create a CEO position, and, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member McCaul, you will recall this, but we consulted broadly on the Hill, both sides of the aisle, to explain what the problem was with not having a CEO and to seek support for naming one. We got that support and after a vigorous search, we hired John Lansing who has now moved on to be the CEO for NPR.

Working with Mr. Lansing, the Board turned to the next matter at hand which was revitalizing and improving the various entities under the aegis of the Broadcasting Board of Governors. Quality attracts quality. With Mr. Lansing at the helm, we were then able to proceed with the hiring of other entity heads who you have heard from two of them—Amanda Bennett and Jamie Fly. It does not get better than this. You have heard their testimony. You have seen their bios. These are the best of the best in the journalistic world.

We also hired Alberto Fernandez, a former Foreign Service colleague of mine, to run the Middle East Broadcasting Network. Alberto has near-perfect Arabic. Among other things, he was able to go on Arabic language talk shows and go head to head with powerful political adversaries. He could out-think them. He could out-talk them. And, when necessary, he could out-shout them in the defense of U.S. priorities and U.S. national security.

So this about the people, the people who run these agencies and the people who do the frontline work as reporters, and Mr. Fly just described, graphically, the impact that these abrupt changes had on all of them.

The other point I would make, Mr. Chairman and Mr. McCaul, is not just who was chosen but how they were chosen. In each case, this bipartisan board came together, Republicans and Democrats—I am on the Board as an Independent—for unanimous votes appointing again these Agency leaders.

Now all of that is in jeopardy, as you have heard from my former colleagues. The firewall, in particular, is a sensitive issue and I am very worried that the cracks in the firewall are going to destroy the whole image of USAGM. And I would say in this context simply that I cannot say it any better than what William Harlan Hale said in that first VOA broadcast, February 1942.

Speaking in German and aiming to counter Nazi propaganda, he said, “Here speaks a voice from America. Every day at this time, we will bring you the news of the war. The news may be good. The news may be bad. We shall tell you the truth.”

Mr. Chairman, Mr. McCaul, that is what VOA and its sister agencies have done ever since. Our reputation for telling the truth has been a core element of our strength as a Nation. Now it is in danger putting at risk not only our national values, but also our national security. Thank you.

[The written statement of Mr. Crocker follows:]

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member McCaul, it is an honor to appear before this Committee to discuss the roles and missions for the United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM).

These are critical times for our country in the International arena, and USAGM plays a critical role.

I was privileged to serve on the Board of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (later USAGM) from 2013 to 2020. It was a bipartisan board, although my status is as an independent. This was a period in which the Board Chair was first a Democrat and then a Republican. It was also a period of historic change.

Since its inception, the BBG had not had a CEO. Our board recognized this as a major structural flaw: One does not run an \$800 million corporation with no CEO and a part time. After verifying that there were no legal barriers to the establishment of a CEO position by the Board, we engaged members of the Senate and House to explain the issue and seek support for creating and filling a CEO slot.

We found broad bipartisan backing. After a rigorous search led by then Board Chairman Jeff Shell, we selected John Lansing, a career journalist of extraordinary ability and accomplishment. He is also an extraordinary manager. He reviewed the entire USAGM structure, identifying problems and proposing solutions. He dramatically improved coordination and cooperation among the entities and agencies, eliminating redundancies and building a strong sense of common purpose that not only realized more efficient use of resources, but improved the quality of our output. Congress remained engaged on the issue, and passed legislation establishing a CEO position that would be nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member McCaul, the most important asset USAGM has is the people who work for its cause, from reporters around the world who have the ability and courage to report the news accurately and honestly. In many cases, they do so

at great personal risk of harassment, imprisonment, physical abuse and even death—all for telling the truth in an arena of totalitarian lies. This is at the core of the USAGM mission, and has been since the founding of VOA during the darker days of WW II. It also means finding the very best people for senior positions whose values and abilities are consistent with that mission and who will inspire and lead their agencies and entities.

That effort became easier with John Lansing at the helm. Admired and respected throughout the media, he in turn attracted the best and the brightest. It made our job as a Board considerably easier. I can say with a total lack of modesty that we fielded the A Team. Two of its members sit before you—Amanda Bennett who headed VOA and Jamie Fly, former CEO of RFE/RL. They can tell you their stories. Suffice it for me to say that you simply cannot find more capable and dedicated leaders. And it should not surprise you to know that they worked closely with each other. The best gravitate to the best.

Among the leaders who are not here is Alberto Fernandez who headed the Middle East Broadcasting Network—MBN. A former Foreign Service colleague. Alberto speaks nearly perfect Arabic. Good enough to go on Arabic language news programs where he would out think, out talk and when necessary out shout political adversaries in their own language. He also has the moral courage to shine light on the most sensitive issues in the region such as corruption.

The same is true of Libby Liu and later Bay Fang as CEOs of Radio Free Asia. You will not find more informed and vociferous critics of the Chinese government anywhere. Libby also worked to establish the Overseas Technology Fund (OTF) with the mission of circumventing the efforts of autocratic regimes such as China to block the broadcast of the truth. Ambassador Kornbluh will be speaking to that as Chairman of the OTF Board of Directors.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member McCaul, I think it is very important to note not just who we selected for these critical positions, but how. These hiring decisions were made by unanimous votes of the Board.

Democrats and Republicans came together to decide who could best serve USAGM and the nation. There were no partisan votes. This is a matter of great importance to me personally. As a Foreign Service officer, I served six times as an American Ambassador abroad. Three times I represented Republican Administrations, and three times Democratic. I served the American people, not a political party.

Even in this time of hyper-partisanship, the USAGM Board on which I was privileged to serve was able to maintain its focus on the national security interests of the United States and to act accordingly, getting the right people in the right places and insuring that the mission of the agency was properly and effectively implemented.

That Board was dissolved in June, in accordance with the legislation establishing a Presidentially nominated and Senate confirmed CEO position. We expected this. What we did not expect was the wholesale firing of the agency and entity heads we had worked so hard to identify and recruit. Nor did we expect that the Agency's

career executives would be dismissed or sidelined. CEO Pack's actions have demoralized Agency staff, most critically our reporters in the field. The firewall, which has been the guarantor of objective and honest reporting for more than 75 years, is under attack. We are in danger, I believe, of seeing USAGM transformed into precisely the propaganda mouthpiece we have so vigorously condemned in places like China and Russia.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member McCaul, I cannot say it better than William Harlan Hale did in that first VOA broadcast in February 1942. Speaking in German and aiming to counter Nazi propaganda, he said this: "Here speaks a voice from America. Every day at this time, we will bring you the news of the war. The news may be good. The news may be bad. We shall tell you the truth." And that is what VOA and its sister agencies have done ever since. Our reputation for telling the truth has been a core element of our strength as a nation. Now it is in danger, putting at risk not only our national values but also our national security.

Thank you.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much, Ambassador. Thank you.

I will now recognize members of the committee for 5 minutes each. Pursuant to the rules, all time yielded is for the purpose of questioning our witnesses. Because of the hybrid, virtual format of this hearing, I will recognize members by committee seniority, alternating between Democrats and Republicans. If you miss your turn, please let our staff know and we will come back to you. If you seek recognition, you must unmute your microphone and address the chair verbally. And as we start questioning, I will start by recognizing myself.

Mr. Turner, at the beginning of your testimony, you made clear just how qualified and experienced you are. We are grateful for your years of service, and I presume for much of that time you have held a security clearance. Is that correct?

Mr. TURNER. That is correct, sir.

Mr. ENGEL. Okay, thank you. Now your testimony made clear that following Mr. Pack's arrival when he began a pattern of improper and possibly illegal actions, you raised the alarm. Can you tell us a bit more specifically about who you notified and what their reactions were?

Mr. TURNER. You know, initially, I did not notify anyone outside of the Agency. You know, when a new agency head joins, you assume that they are going to change things. You assume that they want to get an understanding of the organization that they are heading. So, you know, my purpose was to assist Mr. Pack in doing that.

He initially put in place a freeze on personnel actions, on contract actions, and technical or IT migrations, you know, which makes sense, you know, when you first take the seat to get a hold of an agency. You know, but then, you know, then a week goes by and 2 weeks goes by and 3 weeks goes by, and you start seeing that things are really just frozen and people are calling you saying things are breaking down.

And I mentioned calls that I am getting from the grantees saying that, you know, "Grant, if you do not send us funding, I am not going to be able to make payroll next week." This is the CFO of

Radio Free Europe. I mean these are our partners in the broadcasting that we do internationally. They are key to the effectiveness of the Agency and starving them of resources and causing operational harm to them is not, you know, how we intend to get our job done.

Probably about a month into Mr. Pack's tenure, seeing lots of financial mismanagement, hearing from VOA reporters in particular about firewall violations, and being pushed 1 day to potentially commit an Anti-deficiency Act violation—I apologize or take credit for the budget geeks in the room—I realized I had to notify someone and I contacted the financial counterpart that works with us in the State Department's Office of the Inspector General.

I made a disclosure, you know, to them and basically kind of just, you know, laid out what I had been seeing. I also reached out to the Government Accountability Office because they were working on an active review of USAGM governance. And at the time, I spoke with our Senate Appropriations Committee, majority and minority at the same time, along with our excellent General Counsel David Kligerman.

And we disclosed what we had been seeing, and I will say, you know, people were pretty shocked. Some of this has come out in the press and, you know, it is just kind of a sad state of affairs for me because I really like the Agency, the people there, and the mission, and it is sad to see it assailed like this.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. Let me ask you this. Other than the fact that they did not follow your advice, did you have any reason to believe that CEO Pack or his close advisors were unhappy with you because of the concerns you had raised about financial mismanagement at the Agency?

Mr. TURNER. Yes. I think, you know, I have raised these tough issues with them, you know, I said, we cannot, you know, starve our organizations of resources, you know, we have to provide them funding. They are almost a hundred percent funded by the American taxpayer.

You know, I have raised issues that we cannot lose important tools such as those that are provided by our Open Technology Fund grantee. I told them, you know, we cannot just move money around willy nilly and they wanted to do some of that. At one point, they called back, without my awareness, about three and a half million dollars from our grantees.

You know, without the CFO knowing, without our Grants Office being involved, without a grant agreement or amendment being executed, outside of all of our internal controls, calling up the grantees or sending them an email at 4 p.m. and saying, give us 500,000 by 5 p.m., you know, this is ridiculous kind of stuff. So, you know, we are having paper checks delivered to us, you know, for three and a half million dollars over the next couple of days.

And I am saying, this is going to come back to haunt us, we cannot do this. And I know that that did not endear me to Mr. Pack or the team that he had assembled around him. So I think there were lots of reasons.

Mr. ENGEL. Let me ask you some, rapidly, some easy questions to answer. Did any of these communications meetings occur on or about August 12th?

Mr. TURNER. You know, Mr. Pack basically did not communicate with me for much of his tenure and I ended up communicating largely with his leadership team. You know, I sent him probably three, you know, emails on important things in his first week on the job and he, you know, did not reply to any of them. And, you know, I got the message that I should work through the other folks around him.

The first time I met with him was about 2 weeks before I was removed from my position and I met with him on two different occasions that week fairly close to the August 12th date that I was removed. And, certainly, you know, there were some pointed exchanges, you know, shortly before he decided to remove me.

Mr. ENGEL. When you were removed were six other senior officials placed on leave at the same time?

Mr. TURNER. That is correct.

Mr. ENGEL. Do you know if any of the others who were suspended offered counsel to that effect?

Mr. TURNER. Excuse me, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. ENGEL. Yes.

Mr. TURNER. Could you repeat that question?

Mr. ENGEL. Oh, I am sorry. It was—do you know if any of the others who were suspended offered counsel to that effect?

Mr. TURNER. I think everyone was kind of summarily dismissed. You know, they sort of pulled our security clearances, you know, for everyone, and said because you do not have a clearance now and your job requires you to have a clearance, you cannot be in your job.

So it was a pretty quick thing. I might liken it a little bit to, you know, what we call our “Wednesday Night Massacre,” which was Mr. Pack’s first physical day in the office when he sort of decapitated all of our network organizations by firing their leadership and their boards, you know, without any replacements, you know, just removing them.

And I think the six of us were removed because, you know, we are sort of, you know, the folks who are following the regs and the rules and making sure that, you know, we are in compliance of what this institution asks of us, what the Administration and OMB asks of us, and I think that was getting in their way.

Mr. ENGEL. Has Mr. Pack scheduled any administrative proceedings related to your suspension and, if so, when are those scheduled for?

Mr. TURNER. Yes, sir. He did. The administrative hearings were scheduled for today at the time of this committee hearing.

Mr. ENGEL. And when did you learn about those proceedings?

Mr. TURNER. It is within the past week.

Mr. ENGEL. Do you believe that your suspension was, in fact, retaliatory in nature?

Mr. TURNER. Yes, I am pretty sure that it is. It sure feels like it. You know, I have been a civil servant who has worked hard for, you know, both sides of the aisle in Administrations run by Republicans and Democrats, and, you know, I was here to help Mr. Pack. I think he would have had a better chance at achieving some success.

I do not think he has a strategy, but it certainly feels retaliatory to me and it is my view that that is the case with the others that were removed as well.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, it is my view too. I think it was retaliatory. I think you did your job, tried to keep the Agency's leadership on the straight and narrow, and told your superiors things they did not want to hear including that they might be breaking the law. So now they are trying to fire you, I think it is outrageous.

So, Mr. Turner, I want to thank you. It takes a lot of courage to do what you are doing today. You are a public servant in the truest sense of the term. If it were not for people like you, our government agencies would not function properly, they would just crumble, and the gross mismanagement, people all over the world, really, would wonder why we were not fulfilling our commitments. And if it were not for people like you, the truth would never come to light when people in power abuse that power and think that the rules do not apply to them. So I salute you and I can assure you, this committee is going to have your back.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. I yield back and recognize the ranking member, Mr. McCaul, for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCAUL. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to, first, before I begin my questions, enter into the record a letter to the Honorable Michael Pack, on July 1st, 2020, signed by several United States Senators including Marco Rubio, Lindsey Graham, and Susan Collins.

Mr. ENGEL. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information referred to follows:]

September 2, 2020

The Honorable Eliot Engel
Chairman
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Room 2426 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael McCaul
Ranking Member
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Room 2001 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
Room 2365 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1026 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

*Re: Industry Concerns Related to U.S. Agency for Global Media Hold on Allocated
Funding for Open Technology Fund*

Dear Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, Chairwoman Lowey, and Ranking Member
Granger:

The undersigned organizations write to express concern regarding recent reports that the Open
Technology Fund (OTF) has issued stop-work orders on approximately 80% of its active internet
freedom projects due to a delay in receiving Congressionally allocated funding from the U.S.
Agency for Global Media.¹ We respectfully request that you seek a prompt disbursement of
allocated funds to permit the resumption of OTF's important internet freedom and security
projects.

We believe that in order for the internet to remain an open and dynamic vehicle for innovation,
freedom, and empowerment, the United States must continue to serve as a leader in promoting
research and availability of security technologies that enable consumers and businesses to defend
against an ever-increasing array of cybersecurity threats from hostile actors.

Over the past eight years, OTF has provided vital support for open-source security projects that
have become widely-used tools for protecting sensitive personal and business data. For example,
OTF was an early supporter of the development of secure communications technology that is
currently deployed in commercial messaging services with a global user base of over two billion

¹ Daniel Lippman, "Funding fight threatens to halt U.S. internet freedom projects," Politico (July 30, 2020),
<https://www.politico.com/news/2020/07/30/internet-freedom-projects-funding-388983>.

individuals.² OTF has also supported research and development of tools for websites to enable secure browsing and mitigate internet routing attacks, currently utilized in the protection of hundreds of millions of websites.³

As more Americans adopt digital products and services to connect with friends and family, conduct business and commerce, access education, receive health information, and enjoy entertainment, strong security safeguards are increasingly necessary. Interruptions to OTF's work threatens to leave Americans less secure in the evolving digital threat environment. We respectfully ask for your assistance in helping to ensure that OTF receives a prompt disbursement of Congressionally appropriated funds to resume its vital internet freedom and security work.

Sincerely,

Computer & Communications Industry Association
Engine
SIIA

² Open Technology Fund, "Open Whisper Systems,"
<https://www.opentech.fund/results/supported-projects/open-whisper-systems/>.

³ Open Technology Fund, "Secure Domain Validation,"
<https://www.opentech.fund/results/supported-projects/securing-domain-validation/>.

Mr. MCCAUL. I would also like to enter into the record a joint statement with myself and Senator Marsha Blackburn, on August 18th, expressing our extreme concerns by the state of affairs at USAGM.

Mr. ENGEL. Without objection.
[The information referred to follows:]

**Statement for the Record from Ranking Member McCaul
“Oversight of the United States Agency for Global Media and U.S. International
Broadcasting Efforts”
September 24, 2020**

Ranking Member McCaul’s Joint Statement with Senator Marsha Blackburn, August 18th, 2020

“We are extremely concerned by the state of affairs at USAGM. With dangerous totalitarian regimes on the rise, including the Chinese Communist Party, it is essential that USAGM programs and that of their grantees like the Open Technology Fund, are up and running, and performing their vital work in accordance with their preexisting agreement with USAGM.

“We have given USAGM multiple opportunities to answer pertinent questions about both personnel and programming issues, but have been met with continued resistance and, at times, misleading statements, from their leadership.”

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you.

You know, I have been heading this China Task Force up for the last 6 months. Voice of America took our “Origins of COVID-19” report, which was almost like an indictment of the Chinese Communist Party and the cover-up that took place, all based on truth. We translated that into Mandarin. We got it through into mainland China and the report went viral because the people of China need to know the truth about their government. This is a great example of what USAGM can do and how we can penetrate through their firewalls to talk to the people directly.

It got the attention of President Xi’s spokesman. There was an hour-long CGTN, their propaganda television show, an hour-long special debunking the “McCaul Report.” I mean, I find that this is one of the most valuable things we have in the State Department to talk directly to the people in China who are oppressed every day. Talk to the people in Iran who are oppressed every day, people in Russia, in North Korea; so I see great value in this and I do not want to see it destroyed or reduced by 80 percent because \$20 million that Congress appropriated has essentially been impounded.

So my question is this, and I look, you know, Ambassador Crocker, I have no greater respect for any Ambassador more than him, who served in, you know, Lebanon during the Marines bombing in Beirut to the serving in—last Ambassador from Syria, Pakistan, Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan. My god. I mean it always asks me the question, what did I do wrong?

But he has done such a great job serving the United States of America in these outposts and nobody knows this better than he does. So I would like to pose my question, actually, to you, Mr. Turner, but also if I could give Ambassador Crocker and Ambassador Kornbluh some time to talk about what impact of the actions of Mr. Pack and this purging and also, basically, I would say borderline actions, or actions in defiance of congressional intent in appropriations, what impact is that having on our foreign policy?

I do not think the top of the State Department, I wonder, and I would urge Secretary Pompeo to take a look at what is going on within his own Department. This undermines the very things we are trying to achieve. The very goals that Secretary Pompeo and I have talked about, I believe these actions undermine that.

And, finally, Ambassador Crocker, you say our reputation for telling the truth has been a core element of our strength as a Nation. Now it is in danger of putting at risk not only our national values but also our national security. Ambassador Crocker, I put great value in those words from probably the most esteemed Ambassador the United States has ever had. So with that, Ambassador Crocker, I would like for you and Ambassador Kornbluh to respond to that.

And then, Mr. Turner, since you are here in person it would be nice to have your response.

Mr. CROCKER. Thank you very much, Mr. McCaul, and thank you for those kind words. I would stress again here that I am politically an independent. That is a status that I assiduously protected during my years in the Foreign Service and I continue to do so.

I would say this. I was an ambassador to six countries in my career. I served Republican Administrations for three of those terms

and Democratic Administrations through the other three. I do say with a total lack of modesty that I think I have a pretty good feel for what works and what does not, what is right and what is not. What we got right were the right people in the right places and we did this by unanimous bipartisan board votes.

Bipartisanship is in increasingly short supply and I commend you, Mr. Chairman, and you, Mr. McCaul, for keeping that spirit alive in this critical committee. It is about telling the truth. It is not about disseminating propaganda. That is what our adversaries do in Russia and China.

Since 1942, our national reputation has been reinforced by the activities and the reporting of the USAGM grantees and entities. It started from day one, as I said in my statement. When we deviate from that we are putting at risk our leadership role in the world. We are effectively in the minds of so many.

Mr. McCaul, you referred to your superb China report. Our strength vis-a-vis the Chinese Government is that we do tell the truth. That when a report like this is produced and when VOA and others broadcast it, our listeners around the world pay attention because of our reputation for truth. When you take that away we become like our adversaries. Not better than them, simply doing what they do. People figure that out.

Damage has been done. I think there is no question about that. Our legitimacy, our reputation for candor, our reputation for truth has already been significantly undermined. And when that happens, the rest of our foreign policy initiatives are undermined. People are not stupid. They know what they are hearing. They know what the truth sounds like. They know who tells it. That was axiomatic until June with these mass firings.

And I would say, if I could just echo what you have already said, Mr. Chairman and Mr. McCaul, it was not just us on the boards who were dismissed. It was also the case of some very, very top-notch senior executives as Mr. Turner represents, the best in the business. The best in the business at what they do with a complete understanding of what the firewall is and how it is important.

In all of this mess we have had since June, one of the things I regret the most is how these individuals were treated. And I am very happy to hear that the committee will stand by these brave individuals you do not get better in Civil Service, just as you do not get a better set of entity heads than we had with Ms. Bennett, Mr. Fly, and their colleagues.

And, finally, on China, if I could just say a word. Two other people that deserve mention and deserve praise for what they did, that would be Libby Liu and Bay Fang. Libby, of course, headed Radio Free Asia before she stepped up to direct the team, OTF, the team we established, and they then replaced her at RFA.

If you want people who can dip into the minds of the regime in China to—which makes them feel that they are coming under fire for their lies they tell their own people, you do not find better people than Libby and Bay to send that message. So I would, as a former career Foreign Service Officer, I just want to salute the extraordinary quality of career people as well as other appointments who have carried the message of America abroad for so long. It

pains me greatly to see us move into an era where that may no longer be the case. Thank you.

Mr. McCAUL. Thank you, Ambassador, and thank you for your service. And now that my time is expired, I would just ask that the witnesses, all of the witnesses appearing before the committee today respond to my question in writing.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. McCaul. The gentleman yields back.

Mr. Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Our communications efforts illustrate for the world our democracy and the rule of law. That can work only if lawmakers are able to do their job. Mr. Pack's refusal to be here demonstrates to the many who depend upon our communications efforts that at least in that instance our democracy is not working well.

But this hearing illustrates also the opposite. This is—we have issued a bipartisan subpoena for Mr. Pack, and I, without objection, would like to enter into the record Mr. McCaul's statement on this issue and the need for a subpoena.

Mr. ENGEL. Without objection.

[The information referred to follows:]

**Statement for the Record submitted by Representative Sherman
“Oversight of the United States Agency for Global Media and U.S. International
Broadcasting Efforts”
September 24, 2020**

McCaul Statement on Subpoena for USAGM CEO Michael Pack

[Press Release](#) 09.18.20
Media Contact 202-225-5021

Today, the House Foreign Affairs Committee issued a subpoena for the testimony of USAGM CEO Michael Pack. The subpoena was issued after Mr. Pack cancelled his scheduled testimony for September 24th. Below is a statement from Lead Republican Michael McCaul.

“It’s unfortunate we have arrived here today, but CEO Pack has left this committee few options. USAGM should be doing all they can to carry out their mission to support democracy efforts around the world. Instead, since assuming his position as CEO, Mr. Pack has made decisions that place critical national security programs, including the Open Technology Fund, in jeopardy – and he needs to come before this committee and explain those actions. I strongly urge CEO Pack to abide by his longstanding commitment to testify before our committee next week.”

Mr. SHERMAN. And I think then that this instance can help us demonstrate to the world that the rule of law does work here and that it is important for this committee to make sure this matter does not drop; that there are consequences for Mr. Pack no matter which Administration takes office in January.

I am a bit confused as to Mr. Pack's mission. I thought at first it might just be megalomania, desire to replace one person with another person to show he can. Then I thought it might be some extreme libertarian budget-cutting. But the soft power of the United States costs almost nothing compared to our military forces and does not endanger our servicemen and women.

And then we discovered that one ideological issue and that—and I have focused as the committee knows on our broadcasting and other communications efforts to Pakistan. I have urged that we have a Sindh service as well as one in Urdu. And in the Urdu service they covered for a couple of minutes an appeal by Biden to American Muslim voters, which at some point should be balanced by a demonstration that both parties want the votes of every group of Americans and that Muslims and all the communities of the United States are a treasured part of the mosaic of the United States.

As one witness pointed out, our broadcasting and other efforts represents government-funded, independent journalism. That is a tricky thing to do. And that is why we prohibit these organizations from communicating with the American people because there could be some effect on our elections. Now it is possible that some American voter saw this little clip of Biden saying that Democrats want Muslim votes. And it is possible that the Urdu service has not yet communicated that Republicans want Muslim votes.

But clearly, we are all in the politics business here. We all communicate with different ethnic groups. You could certainly influence more American Muslim voters with a thousand dollars spent on media that actually reaches Americans than you could with some obscure—with all due respect, not a lot of Americans are focused on just a minute or two broadcast of Urdu service.

What particularly concerns me though is the J-1 visas. We bring people here. We ask them to be honest and to speak truth to countries where speaking truth can get you killed or at least imprisoned. Then Mr. Pack denies the application, refuses to file the application to extend their J-1 visas which means they are subject to deportation to the very place that we asked them to tell truth to a country where truth is illegal.

I would like any of the witnesses, but particularly Mr. Turner, to comment. Are lives in danger because of Mr. Pack's efforts? Or is the freedom of these journalists in danger if they get deported?

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Congressman. Yes, I think that is one of the biggest worries of the people that have been removed and the folks that are appearing at this hearing today is the fate of these J-1 visa holders. You know, they are a very, very specialized expertise that we—

Mr. SHERMAN. And if—we see them here in the hallways.

Mr. TURNER. Yes.

Mr. SHERMAN. When American journalists are not interested in some hearing of this committee, they may be the only journalists.

Mr. TURNER. Correct.

Mr. SHERMAN. And they are asking questions. And they are saying things that might get them in trouble if they were back in their home countries.

Mr. TURNER. Yes.

Mr. SHERMAN. And Mr. Pack wants to send them there?

Mr. TURNER. It could be quite dangerous for many of them. Obviously, in certain countries—Russia, Iran, Vietnam, China, many places around the world—the broadcasting that they are doing for the United States is not welcome. You know, they want to close off their media markets from the truth.

You know, these people are very passionate people, you know, they come from these countries and they often want to drive change in their countries. You know, they want, you know, American values to go to their communities, you know, respect for human dignity, freedom of speech, freedom of religion. And that is why they are, you know, walking around the halls sometimes when other folks, you know, have given up. They really care.

They are difficult to recruit because it is hard to find, you know, a great reporter in some of these really, you know, specific languages, you know, whether it is Urdu, as you mentioned, or if we are recruiting a Sindhi journalist or a Macedonian, you know, they come from the countries. They have a real tactile feel for the communities and the people.

Mr. SHERMAN. And Uncle Sam brings them here, uses them to communicate our message back to their home countries, and then deports them to the loving arms to the very dictators who are so opposed to truth that we thought it was necessary to broadcast into their country.

I believe my time is expired. I yield back. But that is a crime.

Mr. TURNER. Yes, thank you for the question. You know, the harassment, the potential imprisonment, even worse, I think, are at risk for some of our journalists if they return.

Mr. SHERMAN. We ought to be granting asylum, and I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Curtis.

Mr. CURTIS. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I would like to express my appreciation to you and the Ranking Member McCaul for holding this hearing. I would like to express my appreciation for your leadership to the two of you particularly in your introduction of the Open Technology Fund Authorization Act. It was my real pleasure to be the Republican co-lead on that bill.

The Open Technology Fund is a vital part of helping journalists and democracy activists around the world. I think of China's firewall and how important it is in that role. I think of Iran and when it was used last January to restore the internet when hundreds of protestors had been killed, how incredibly important it is in that role.

And as I am listening to this hearing, trying to not place nefarious motives on Mr. Pack, I wish he was here to defend himself because in his absence we are left to speculate as to his motives and they just do not sound good, and I hope eventually we will understand what those are.

Mr. McCaul has talked about the role of the OTF in China. I would like to point out two other regions of the world and ask some specific questions. Perhaps, Ambassador Kornbluh, you can help me. In Belarus has there been a role of the OTF and, if so, how has it impacted that and what obstacles are we encountering in Belarus?

Ms. KORNBLUH. Thank you very much for your question. I did want to start, first, by echoing what my colleague, Ambassador Crocker, said about the importance and the professionalism and expertise of the people, leaders that we recruited, and call out OTF's leadership including Laura Cunningham. She and her team are working under incredible pressure and I just admire their work very much.

On Belarus, specifically, OTF has supported internet freedom projects for Belarus for over 5 years. Unfortunately, due to the funding freeze, OTF has been forced to issue stop work orders to all of its Belarus projects. Prior to the stop work orders, OTF has been supporting the most popular anti-censorship and secure communications tools in Belarus including Psiphon, Tor, and Signal.

And OTF also provided digital security support to Belarus civil society groups. It funded secure hosting and cyber-attack mitigation platforms for Belarusian civil society. It developed peer-to-peer solutions to combat internet blackouts. And it funded cutting-edge net monitoring tools to better understand and ultimately overcome censorship in Belarus.

This shows you the multipronged approach that OTF takes both focusing on funding the technology and empowering the people and protecting them. Despite ongoing funding challenges, OTF has continued to try to find ways to support journalists and civil society in Belarus during this critical time. For example, after the Belarusian Government announced that it had blocked all RFE/RL websites, OTF worked quickly to spin up several mirror sites so that Belarusians could continue to access RFE/RL's website.

Mr. CURTIS. Thank you. It would be hard to imagine a better dollar-for-dollar investment for the results in these cases that we have mentioned and in Belarus.

Quickly, before I run out of time, Mr. Fly, would you speak to the Radio Free Europe, the role that Radio Free Europe plays particularly combating Russian aggression in Europe?

Mr. FLY. RFE/RL plays an essential role. We were just discussing Belarus where RFE/RL has a Belarusian language service, Radio Svaboda, which over decades has provided hope and inspiration to the Belarusian people, and in moments like this when the people are taking their future into their own hands, has played a key role trying to share information between the people about what is going on in the streets, about what the government is doing about the crackdown, revealing the truth about the crackdown.

And as Ambassador Kornbluh said, networks like RFE as part of the USAGM family rely on entities like OTF to help circumvent a lot of the restrictions that governments impose on our broadcasts or our distribution. Beyond Belarus, another key role that RFE/RL plays is inside Russia itself where it has a Russian service, a 24/7 Russian TV network, Current Time, in cooperation with Voice of

America, and has been doing increasingly important digital work reaching a younger generation of Russians.

And in response to that, the Russian Government has been cracking down, declaring RFE/RL a foreign agent, trying to force its journalists out of the country. Despite that, they continue operating out of a relatively large bureau in Moscow putting themselves and their families covering a wide range of issues from the pandemic to politics. And through all of these services in Russia and outside, we are pushing back against Russian efforts to control the information space.

Mr. CURTIS. Thank you, Mr. Fly and the rest of the witnesses. I am out of time. I yield the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Curtis.

Mr. Sires.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing.

And thank you to the witnesses for being here. And, Mr. Turner, thank you for your strength and your courage to come before this committee.

And, Mr.—my friend, there, Michael Pack, you know, this committee works on a bipartisan basis. We fund you on a bipartisan basis. All the people that you see around this room here that have their portraits here all supported the efforts of that Agency. And here you have this hack coming in and destroying some of the most important things that America can do.

I came from a country that is very repressive. I came from Cuba. I know what repression is. I know what repression of the press is. I know what stories are that make it to the front page. I have been called a member of the mafia along with Mario Diaz-Balart, with Senator Menendez, in the front page of the Cuban paper. We need to combat that. And the Agency that does that is this, the Voice of America and the people that work there.

So when you have somebody like this who Senator Menendez questioned his confirmation from the very beginning that he was not—it was someone who had questionable qualifications to head this Agency, who is under investigation by the IRS, it makes you wonder how these people get confirmed to lead an agency so important as this one. Someone who is endangering people, these journalists who are so courageous in this country, because if these people have to go back to their countries you know that they are going to be harassed, put in jail, or killed.

So I am very concerned about the direction that this Agency is going. As chairman of the Western Hemisphere, I am concerned about what is going on in Venezuela, this information there, what is going on in Nicaragua. He is shutting down the newspapers. He is shutting down the independent journalists. And we are the only buffer. We are the only people that can get the truth to those who live in those countries, and that is just two of the countries. Not to talk about Russia or Belarus and all the other places that we have.

So I find it a little bit conspicuous that one of the things that seems to be happening is that we are destroying our efforts to go into Russia and tell the truth to the Russian people because of the chummy-chummy relationship that our President has with Putin.

I wonder what goes on in those conversations where we do not get a transcript of. Is this a result of that?

Mr. TURNER. I know people are very concerned about the politicization, you know, of the Agency and I know that is a primary concern of this committee. As you point out, the value is in the truth and getting that information out there. I think, you know, Mr. Pack has just forced the Agency to stagnate and, you know, stagnation and decline may be a bit of its future.

You mentioned Cuba. In 2018, this is a country with the highest growth in internet access in the world. They started from a very low base.

Mr. SIRES. And we worked very hard to get there.

Mr. TURNER. Yes. And there are opportunities now as there are in China, as there are in other markets around the world. And this team does not seem to be focused on a strategy. It does not seem to be focused on how to get the best bang for our buck, you know, to look at our audiences and the platforms and how to engage the world with truthful information and information about our policies.

And I think that is one of the biggest downsides right now. In addition to the loss of credibility is we are losing time in a critical moment.

Mr. SIRES. You know, one of the things that bothers me is how people could ignore a subpoena from a committee. To me that bothers me to no end because there should be some consequences for these people who do not want to answer of their actions that they are committing in the work that they do when we fund them. It is the taxpayers' money and we are entitled to know where that money goes and why they make the decisions that they make.

So to me, we have to change this idea that people just can ignore a subpoena from a committee. My time is running out, but I thank you for your courage in coming here.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Congressman.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Sires.

Mr. Perry.

Mr. PERRY. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I will tell you, I would not know Mr. Pack if he was standing right in front of me and this seems like a pretty substantial hit job on him and his actions and et cetera, et cetera. But I want to point out some things that apparently are not going to be pointed out by anybody else here.

Last June, a former chief strategy officer for the Agency working closely with the former CEO of USAGM went to prison for stealing nearly \$40,000 during his tenure. In 2018, a reporter and a cameraman faked a mortar attack in Nicaragua. Well, that is interesting reporting. In the fall of 2018, the Voice of America fired 15 of its employees after discovering they were accepting bribes from a—or, correction—a Nigerian official. Wonderful.

The Hoover Institution released a report citing concerns on China's influence on American institutions including China's charm offensive on agencies like the VOA and the CCP's proclivity to otherwise threaten VOA reporters and their families. Boy, I bet we love to hear that is going on. In late 2018, the House Foreign Affairs Committee, this very committee, this committee with these people on it, said the USAGM was a broken agency.

But I guess, according to what we are hearing today, we should just let it go, just let it continue. Former Secretary Clinton described USAGM as “practically defunct” in its capacity to tell a message around the world. I am glad we are paying for that. When Mr. Pack went to investigate the Open Technology Fund at their DC location, his employees found laptops and hard drives left unsecured in boxes. An internal door connecting the Open Technology Fund organization with other entities in the building complex was not only unlocked, it was wide open.

I suspect the Russians, the Chinese, the Iranians, and North Koreans, none of them have any interest in finding out what might be in those computers. China, Russia, and other adversaries are constantly trying to hack U.S. agencies. This discovery was not a great look for the OTF. Apparently, OTF has also been holding meetings on Zoom calls. Well, that sounds pretty secure to me as an individual who has been privileged and honored to hold a top-secret security clearance for about 35 years in the U.S. military.

Mr. Chairman, I want to enter for the record a letter from Mr. Pack to you where he says that his staff proposed 8 days within the month of September when they could appear. If you would, sir.

Mr. ENGEL. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information referred to follows:]



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



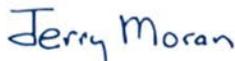
Richard J. Durbin
U.S. Senator



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

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Chairman, this committee respects the importance of media independence, media freedom as absolutely essential to any functioning civil society and we are aware and familiar with the firewall put in place to protect journalists working at USAGM and its subdivisions from political interference. We all support such protections for our journalists and reporters.

Highlighting some of the issues will shed light as to why Mr. Pack was confirmed by the U.S. Senate to his current role and the charge that is now before him to reform the Agency. Let's start out with a newly released report from the Office of Personnel and Management detailing USAGM's poor vetting practices for its employees. Fifteen hundred—1,500 USAGM employees and contractors between 2010 and 2020—that is right now in case anybody is wondering—40 percent of the Agency's work force were not properly vetted before being hired.

Well, I do not know. Who should Mr. Pack look toward that for accountability there? Should he look toward us sitting up here? I do not know. I would think it would be the people running the Agency. According to Real Clear Politics, the Agency cleared hundreds of employees and contractors to work for the U.S. Government, many from authoritarian nations the U.S. considers adversaries. These unvetted employees maintained access to USAGM broadcasting platforms and tools, government buildings, IT systems, and senior government officials.

Oh, I wonder why this Agency is incompetent and ineffective and inept. I wonder why. I have no idea. The reforms undertaken by Mr. Pack have undergone a significant amount of public scrutiny as they should, but USAGM's poor vetting procedures over those last decades continue to threaten U.S. national security and it is entirely the fault of those who mismanaged the process, whoever that is.

Both USAGM and the State Department employees have said that OTF's budget can be broken down into two parts, approximately 25 percent of it spent on technology tools that facilitate its missions to break through barriers of authoritarian technology control—25 percent. And I will conclude, Mr. Chairman, the other 75 percent is dedicated to extravagant conferences at popular resort spots, extremely generous salaries, benefits, and redundant projects already being undertaken at other agencies.

I do not know what is going on here, but I am not ready to blame Mr. Pack for everything. He should be allowed to come in here and we should work collaboratively instead of the road show and the circus that is going on right now in this committee. And I thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Perry.

Let me just say that Mr. Pack had every opportunity to be here today to defend himself and his actions. He is the one who chose not to come and to ignore this committee. And in terms of the dates that he proposed to come to us and you said we did not accept it, those proposed dates were in October when the House is in recess.

So it made no sense for him to come when the House is in recess. He could have come today and defended himself and he could have

given us some dates. We would have been happy to accommodate him.

Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, there is a fallacy in the logic of my friend who just spoke in positing that there are a series of problems over the last ten or 20 years and that is why we had to have a total purge and the dismantlement of programs that are, in fact, effective, reach audiences, and propound a democratic point of view in authoritarian societies.

That is false logic. If there are problems you clean them up. You do not dismantle and purge the organization and that is what we are talking about. And if the actions Mr. Perry says are justifiable, if they are justifiable, then I would assume Mr. Pack would run, not walk, to this hearing to propound his philosophy and defend his actions and it is final. His absence speaks volumes about the fact that he, A, does not believe, apparently, in his own personal accountability while justifying his purges as an act of accountability for others, and he apparently does not have the confidences on actions and so-called reform to come before the committee and justify them.

Ms. Kornbluh, I was really bowled over by your testimony because you enumerated the actual consequences of the actions undertaken by Mr. Pack on a wide swath of the world in terms of programs. Is it your view that while painful, what Mr. Pack is doing is just cleaning up problems that were ignored by predecessors, and is it your view that apparently my friend from Pennsylvania wants us to believe that the organization is just replete with people who are partying on the taxpayer dime and, you know, being callous about their computers and, frankly, being ineffectual in their work?

Is that a fair characterization, in your view, of the organization whose board you chaired?

Ms. KORNBLUH. Thank you so much for giving me a chance to respond. It is hard not to be emotional about this because the team at OTF, it is a small team. There are ten people. They have voluntarily taken a pay cut under the financial pressure that the Agency is in because they care so much about the mission and vulnerable journalists and human rights activists and ordinary people around the world who are using their tools and services.

I would love to be able to submit for the record fuller responses but, needless to say, I believe the Congressman has been misinformed. The security claims are just not true. We do not leave information on hard drives. We do not use Zoom. Ninety percent of the funding is used for programming, for technology. There are no two million dollars in conferences. I think that must be a problem with somebody reading some numbers.

In the past we have spent 200,000 on bringing together civil society groups, but nothing like two million. In light of the epidemic, of course, we have not been bringing people together at all. So those claims are, unfortunately, not true.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So wait a minute. I want to get this straight. So you all did not spend two million dollars on Donald Trump-owned properties like Mar-a-Lago or, you know, that was the Secret Service. Sorry. Maybe my friend got that mixed up.

Ms. KORNBLUH. Thank you.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Can I just ask a question here—

Ms. KORNBLUH. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY [continuing]. Because my time is going to run out. But again, going back to your testimony which was so compelling in terms of the damage being done here, the opportunity costs we are incurring, and it is a self-inflicted incurrence, you know, in criminal law one of the questions always asked when investigators are looking at crime is “cui bono?” Who benefits?

When we look at what Mr. Pack has done to this organization, who benefits? It seems to me, deliberate or otherwise, Mr. Pack is handing a gift to the Chinese, to the Russians, to the Iranians, and the Venezuelans. But maybe that is just me. What do you think?

Ms. KORNBLUH. I think, unfortunately, that the actions taken against the Open Technology Fund strengthen America’s adversaries and competitors. It threatens authoritarians around the world by weakening a key element of American soft power.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I want to give Ms. Bennett or Mr. Fly an opportunity to respond as well, if I have time, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, you do not. But we will—if they speed it up, we will let them get a few words in.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I am sorry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your graciousness.

Mr. TURNER. I am happy to give a quick response to some of the things that Congressman Perry brought up. It is true we had a chief strategy officer a couple years ago who was faking travel. We fired him. I signed that letter. You know, we do not put up with that.

There was questions about a mortar attack and how a video was edited at Office of Cuba Broadcasting. They have been investigating it and proposing those people, two people, for removal because they care about their credibility. The Nigerian, it was our Hausa staff. Someone left envelopes, a dignitary who came to visit, and, you know, we cannot have the appearance that there is, you know, any influence on the journalism. So VOA removed those people.

OTF does not have hard drives. They are a cloud-based system. I do not know what was seen on the floors when they went into the office. They have not been operating there. They have been mostly working from home because of the pandemic. I have not used Zoom with them. Jitsi is a product that they funded, which is secure, and they use that tool.

As far as the OPM report, you know, they dinged us for a lot of administrative things and we have been trying to resolve those. There were 37 items in the report that they delivered. We have addressed more than half of those. There was no recommendation that we should remove people from their jobs because, you know, there was not an MOU in place, which is the reason that, you know, that they pointed to.

Ultimately, we are not a national security agency. Mr. Pack is making it seem like national security is at risk here. If you are a VOA journalist and sit down at your desk, you cannot log into any national security data base. It is a building full of journalists. Our grantees are buildings full of journalists who are running down stories by talking to Congressmen like yourselves, newsmakers.

So I think it is really just sort of pretext and a good cover for taking some, you know, abhorrent actions.

Mr. ENGEL. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Burchett.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all for being here. I would like to deviate from the current conversation and talk a little bit about Belarus.

Mr. Turner, while you were CFO, did you review any proposed plan for Radio Free Europe to surge its broadcasts and increase support for free Belarus in light of the present protests that have erupted there?

Mr. TURNER. I do not recall that specifically. Obviously, that is an important country in Radio Free Europe's portfolio. You know, we give wide discretion in terms of the use of budgetary resources to our grantees, so Jamie Fly as the leader of that organization really has the say over where is the money best spent. So I would defer to him on maybe specific questions about Belarus and Radio Svaboda.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. Well, let me just ask you this then. If something like that were to happen, walk me through the process to where there would be that ramp-up, so to speak, and what is the ultimate goal? You know, oddly enough, the first time—I remember hearing about Radio Free Europe my whole life, and then in college this little band out of Georgia called R.E.M. was playing on the Cumberland Avenue strip—

Mr. TURNER. Good one.

Mr. BURCHETT [continuing]. And came out with the song "Radio Free Europe" and we all thought it was cool, but we never really understood what it was about. But I see several people in the audience nodding that they were, in fact, their age group is in mine, so that is cool. But I would like to know that process if you would just—it is not even in my notes. It just came to me.

Mr. TURNER. Sure.

Mr. BURCHETT. I am just curious at how that whole thing works. And what is the goal? I mean do you get on there and just pro, you know, pro-freedom, pro-what, and then how does it work? How do you get the people to listen, first of all?

Mr. TURNER. Yes.

Mr. BURCHETT. You know.

Mr. TURNER. You know it is amazing, just sort of, you know, the power of truth. The ranking member talked about China and the start of the pandemic, and we saw our numbers in China shoot up tremendously after the coronavirus broke out because people in Wuhan are looking around and they know something bad is happening and their government is not telling them what it is, so they were flocking to Radio Free Asia.

They are flocking to VOA to find that truthful information. We saw that in Iran when protests broke out this summer over the kind of dire economic straits there. We saw it after the killing of General Soleimani where our numbers shoot up. When there are cases where we really want to try to surge into an area and, you know, increase maybe the number of frequencies that we are broadcasting on or add additional hours of television or radio, which is mostly staff time, you know, it is mostly, you know, people

in studios and cameras that are involved in this, we kind of, you know, circle the wagons and pull together the funding in order to provide that surge.

We keep approximately 1 percent of our \$800 million budget as sort of an emergency fund and, you know, if we get through the year without an enormous crisis that we need to tap into it, then it gets spent on the normal things that we do. It is around eight million dollars. So we would have a discussion, first of all, with the head of Radio Free Europe, so in this case we would have discussed this with Jamie Fly. And if he needed resources, we would dispatch that to him. It is really up to him as to how he wants to deploy that.

Is it more people on the ground? Do we need technology support from OTF? In many places around the globe, OTF quietly is providing support to protestors, so the Hong Kong protestors are protecting their identities from surveillance by OTF tools. Protestors in Iran, we have seen it in Beirut, around the world people are using these tools to protect themselves. So we would surge funds on technology and also to the broadcasting operations.

Mr. BURCHETT. How do you know who all is watching it? I mean how do you—what are your ratings? How does that work?

Mr. TURNER. You know, some tools, some information is easier. On digital and social media, we often get metrics from the platform. So on whether it is YouTube or Facebook or Twitter, Instagram, or a particular platform that might be specific to a country, we often can get that digital information. Other times, we actually use surveys. Gallup is one of our biggest providers.

And sometimes it seems strange, but we have—

Mr. BURCHETT. Gallup can trace that like—

Mr. TURNER [continuing]. Gallup polls in Iran and they will—

Mr. BURCHETT. When Congressman McCaul put that deal out on China, I mean I heard a lot about that.

Mr. TURNER. Yes.

Mr. BURCHETT. And that was like, I guess, if he were to walk the streets of China, he probably could not walk the streets. They would probably all be asking for his autographs, but.

Mr. TURNER. Yes. It is the power of the truth. You know, a report like that comes out—

Mr. BURCHETT. Yes.

Mr. TURNER [continuing]. And obviously it elicits a strong reaction, you know, from the CCP because, you know, they fear that kind of truth. And, you know, the information that we provide is just unvarnished truth of the highest journalistic, you know, quality.

Mr. BURCHETT. All right, very cool. So nobody on there is speaking with my accent, I assume.

Mr. TURNER. Well.

Mr. BURCHETT. We already got freedom in Tennessee. We are Radio Free Tennessee all the time, so we are cool.

Mr. TURNER. They would like it. You know, it is amazing, you know, our audiences really are interested in America, you know, we are kind of, you know, a cultural touchstone for the world and people want to know what people are doing, what we are thinking

about. You know, teens in China want to know what teens in America think about different issues.

Mr. BURCHETT. Right.

Mr. TURNER. You know, so it could be, you know, a kid on the streets of Knoxville, if we were interviewing him and translating it to Mandarin, people, kids in China will be listening. Kids in Cuba would want to know what are teens thinking.

Mr. BURCHETT. I have run over, but I would pretty much say for the record that they would probably need a translator for me. So—

Mr. TURNER. We have a lot.

Mr. BURCHETT [continuing]. As many of the members in this committee will attest that they need one as well, but I will go on record.

I know have gone over, Mr. Chairman, but East Tennessee, specifically the second congressional district, is the only place in America where people do not speak with an accent, so thank you.

Mr. ENGEL. You know, Mr. Burchett, I let you speak longer because I just love your accent.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, brother. That is very cool. I appreciate that. I always notice that Representative Omar, sometimes when she is—I just saw her in here, but she has walked out. But sometimes when I speak, she gets a grin on her face and I am not sure what that is about. But—

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. BURCHETT [continuing]. That is cool with me. Thank you, brother.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Deutch.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to you and the ranking member for holding this really critically important hearing today. And I am really grateful to all of the witnesses for coming and sharing your experiences.

I would like to spend the time I have focusing on the role of journalists in the efforts of that we have been discussing today. And, Ms. Bennett, I think I am going to direct most of my questions to you to try to tap into your illustrious career as a decorated and accomplished journalist, and so let me just go through some of these.

First, can you explain the firewall that exists? Tell us what that is and why it is so important to independent journalism.

Ms. BENNETT. Yes, thank you for asking that. A firewall of sorts, although it is not called that, exists in virtually every news organization at least in this country. And the purpose of this firewall is to allow the journalists to operate independently without reference to any kind of pressure from, in the private sector it is from the people who provide the money from the advertising sides, from the circulation side, from people who in the community would want to put pressure on you not to cover one thing or another or to cover it in a specific way.

That firewall is a matter—it is not called a firewall in the private industry, but it does very clearly exist. I operated for most of my career under that system. Moving into USAGM, it was actually a

system that was codified into law and practice. And that meant that the journalists are free to make decisions on what they cover as was just as Mr. Turner just remarked, on where you cover, how you cover it, what journalists you hire, what journalists you discipline and for what purpose, how you maintain critical standards.

Those things are all handled by the journalists without reference to pressure from the outside, because even an identical operation so, example, disciplining someone for biased coverage, it is different when it is done by a journalist who has no actual association with either side of the argument than when it is by people who have some kind of connection with that.

Mr. DEUTCH. All right, so thank you very much. So let me ask you then, for VOA journalists who are being fired, who are being forced to leave the country, can you speak to some of the possible scenarios that they might face when they return home?

Ms. BENNETT. Well, again, as I mentioned, I am no longer there so I cannot speak to specific things that are happening there. But I can say that one of the things that we are always acutely aware of with all our journalists is the dangers they face back home from the reporting that they do. Whether they are in this country or out of this country their families are facing pressure.

Many of the people who are coming to us from other countries are some of the bravest people I know. I, in a 40-year career, used to hear people talk about courageous journalism, and I have said to my colleagues now, I did not know what that meant until I came to VOA and watched the kind of pressure from a variety of things—financial pressure, physical pressure, imprisonment.

We have had to repeatedly, over my career at VOA I have had to deal with extricating journalists from very, very difficult and dangerous situations. So the fact that journalists who are sent home without—suddenly, it certainly could be a danger.

Mr. DEUTCH. So let me be a little more specific. On August 31st, a group of veteran VOA journalists penned a letter to the acting director saying that, and I quote, “the purge appears to be expanding to include U.S. permanent residents and even people who have—

[Audio interference.]

Mr. DEUTCH [continuing]. Recklessly expressing that being a journalist is a great cover for a spy.” Can you share with us, given your experience in a very long and successful career as a journalist, highlight why that kind of remark is so dangerous not just to lives of journalists, but also to truth and transparency which we all know are critical cornerstones of democracy?

Ms. BENNETT. Well, you know, again, without reference to that specific document, which I think speaks very much for itself, I would say that fighting the perception that journalists are spies is one of the most critical factors particularly in reporting from danger zones. As my colleague, my former colleague, Bay Fang, who was the former head of Radio Free Asia who did work in conflict zones, explains, that is something you really had to be very careful with because it would endanger the lives of journalists who were operating in these countries.

So suggestions that journalists are spies is a very critical and very dangerous thing to do. As for the issues with the security

clearance, I think it was Mr. Turner explained it very, very well and in fact that the part of the issue with the vetting procedures that were being scrutinized was that VOA and USAGM were actually trying to use a more stringent vetting procedure that was more appropriate for people who had been living in foreign countries. So it was not that we were doing an insignificant, a less significant procedure. It was that we were trying to do a more significant procedure.

So that is part of the issue was to make sure that these things, the reality and the perception, matched.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you very much, Ms. Bennett. I appreciate it.

And, Mr. Chairman, I join with so many of my colleagues in expressing my great frustration and regret and anger that Mr. Pack is not here to respond to these kinds of questions and to explain to us why he would utter statements like that that are reckless and dangerous, and to actually address our concerns. I hope that we will have the opportunity. I suspect not, but I am grateful for the opportunity to speak with this illustrious panel of witnesses and to hear from them today. Thanks so much. I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Deutch.

Ms. Bass.

Ms. BASS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for holding this hearing. This is just so discouraging to see another part of our government that has just been so compromised. First—

[Audio interference.]

Ms. BASS [continuing]. At the State Department, and now to see this. I wanted to know if you could describe to me what UltraSurf is and who has been pushing it and what the problems with it are. And I am not sure, whichever witness would like to respond to this.

Ms. KORNBLUH. I think maybe I should try. Congresswoman Bass, on UltraSurf, you know, that technology that was rejected by the State Department and the USAGM's office because the technology did not appear to be satisfactory. It is not an open source technology, and that is the limit of what I can say about it as the chair. I have not been involved in evaluating it.

Ms. BASS. Anyone?

Mr. TURNER. I can also add that it is an internet circumvention tool. It focused largely on China. As Ambassador Kornbluh mentioned, it is an open source which is the very—it has not been subjected to a really rigorous code review and audit. We have been unable to fund that tool or work with that organization through OTF because they are not in compliance with the rigorous sort of security reviews that OTF does.

Obviously, when you have these tools that people are risking their lives on, you know, if the government knows that they are accessing our content or perhaps if they are a human rights activist or a protestor it is very dangerous to them, so we really want to have the highest assurance that it is completely safe. We have other tools which reach China very, very effectively and that is sort of my extent of my knowledge of UltraSurf as well. But I am sure the Agency could provide additional information, and OTF as well.

Ms. BASS. Either one of you?

Hello, can you guys hear me?

Ambassador?

Mr. ENGEL. Ms. Bass, can you repeat that because we did not hear you for part of the time.

Ms. BASS. I am sorry. I did not hear you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. We could not hear part of what you were saying so if you could please repeat it.

Ms. BASS. Oh, sure. I was just saying, you know, who has been pushing UltraSurf? Who has been pushing the U.S. Government to support it? And maybe because the connection has been a little dicey, I did not hear if you guys responded before.

Ms. KORNBLUH. Grant, do you have information on that?

Mr. TURNER. You know, I believe the UltraSurf organization has worked in the past with the Lantos Foundation and they have, I think, represented them in some form. But I do not know much more beyond that.

Ms. BASS. Okay. Okay.

Mr. TURNER. You know, other than we, of course, are very willing to consider tools that meet our requirements.

Ms. KORNBLUH. Congresswoman, we would be happy to submit more information for the record for you.

Ms. BASS. Okay. All right. And this is to all of you. Has Mr. Pack ever given any indication that he would demand loyalty from USAGM staff and try to push out those who he did not consider loyal?

Ambassador Crocker? Anybody? Is it difficult to hear me or what is going on?

Mr. ENGEL. We can hear you now. Is there—

Mr. FLY. This is Jamie Fly. I will just say at least in my case there was no demand of loyalty because there was no conversation, which I think was the case with the other network heads. So at least with those of us at the networks who were removed very early, as Grant said on his first day in the office, he did not have time to ask for loyalty because he did not bother to talk to us.

Ms. BASS. And if I am not mistaken, in your earlier testimony it was not as though you were advised that anything that you did was improper?

Mr. FLY. No. It was clear that removed me, and then the one conversation that I had with him about 10 days later that I was removed without cause.

Ms. BASS. Okay.

Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. OK. Thank you, Ms. Bass. Thank you, Ms. Bass.

Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for calling this hearing.

I would like to just ask maybe Jamie Fly or any of the others who might want to respond to this, but back in 2014 when Khadija Ismayilova was arrested, a Radio Free Europe reporter but an indigenous person to Azerbaijan, on, really, trumped-up, politically charged charges that included—that sent her to prison for 7 years, or least got a prison sentence because she was serving some of it, I held a hearing.

We had the vice president editor in chief of programming for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty come and testify, gave great testimony on her behalf. I introduced a bill called the Azerbaijan

Human Rights Act and it listed the people like her who had been unfairly incarcerated and on politically trumped-up charges. And she had pointed out, frankly, how corrupt Aliyev was, and for that she was harshly punished.

I wonder, you know, fast forward to right now with Belarus and what is happening there, you know, many of us have spoken out repeatedly for decades against Alexander Lukashenko who was dubbed for years as the last dictator of Europe, of course, now we again have Putin.

But the problem is that he is a charmer even though he is a harsh man and for a while there it looked like he was getting some traction with Europe and with ourselves with the United States. He did let out most of the political prisoners, but the recent crack-down and the gross mistreatment of the opposition is calling out for again for us to be in absolute solidarity with the democrats who are seeking a better life for all Belarusians.

And I am wondering if you could speak to, if you would, where are we on Azerbaijan? I know this is not as much of a focused hearing on countries' specific concerns and is there plans to ratchet up the effort even more so for Belarus? Because they, you know, obviously, the media is totally controlled by Lukashenko. We know that RT now is running the media as are other operatives from the Kremlin. Not that the ones that they replaced were any better, but it is truly a one monopoly and the message is all Lukashenko, Lukashenko, Lukashenko.

So again, in order to pierce that very, very dangerous misinformation campaign, is RFE/RL ratcheting up its efforts, vis-a-vis Belarus?

Mr. FLY. Thanks for those questions, Congressman, and thanks for your advocacy on behalf of Khadija, and, it goes without saying, to other members as well who often weigh in on behalf of RFE/RL journalists throughout my tenure. In Azerbaijan we have a strong service. We were kicked out of the country when Khadija was the bureau chief because of her investigative reporting about the wealth of the ruling family. So we operate out of Prague, but provide a key service to the Azeri people.

Khadija's—the pressure on Khadija happened well before my tenure, but upon taking office I tried to engage her directly to help her resolve her outstanding issues with the Azeri Government and worked with a number of Members of Congress and with the Department of State on her behalf. I would, unfortunately, report that she still is facing a travel ban, although she is not in prison anymore, but she is not able to travel internationally which is what she was trying to do prior to the pandemic. So her case continues to need support.

In Belarus, to pick up on what Grant Turner was talking about earlier, RFE/RL has had a strong service for decades. This is really the moment that a service like Svaboda steps up, covers protests. My former colleagues tell me that since June, our journalists at Svaboda have a combined total of 125 days behind bars. They have been picked up 16 times while reporting live on the pre-and post-election protests.

So they are out there on the streets putting themselves at risk. And what they need, to pick up on what Grant was talking about

earlier, what they would normally look to USAGM for is surge support. They would look for additional resources to get up on, in this case, the radio airwaves since the internet is often being blocked.

My understanding is RFE/RL has gone up on radio again, temporarily, to deal with this crisis, but it has had to pay for it out of its own pocket because of a lack of a response from Mr. Pack and his team at USAGM. They would be looking for USAGM support in engaging the State Department when their journalists are in prison, as some are, when they are picked up and detained, when their accreditation is stripped.

It is not just the Belarusian journalists inside Belarus, but RFE/RL had a number of Russian-speaking correspondents from its Russian networks who were in Belarus to report all that was happening there so the Russian people knew what was going on in Belarus. They were expelled from the country early on.

And so the unfortunate thing, just to close, as I have been gone during this crisis—it happened shortly after I was fired—is this is the moment where resources should be surged from USAGM, additional support provided to the networks, which is exactly by the way what the Kremlin did for Belarusian State TV, surging in anchors, technical assistants, to make sure that Lukashenko's propaganda network stayed on the air.

We need a similar surge in support for independent media including Radio Svaboda. I think they are doing the best under difficult circumstances, but USAGM could be doing much more from my understanding.

Mr. ENGEL. The gentleman's time has expired.

We go to Mr. Keating.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to thank all of you for your service. I, you know, just think it is important in the beginning to stress the bipartisan support this committee has shown for this Agency. You can look back at the time when the Republican majority was in charge as well as today when the Democratic majority is in charge and it has been consistent and strong and bipartisan.

And that same bipartisanship has come through with the amendment I offered with the National Defense Authorization Act, with the chair and the ranking member joining me, to work with the Agency to depoliticize and to strengthen the oversight function and to prevent changes in the firewall within the Agency.

So it is a strong bipartisan history here that has been deviated by the actions of Mr. Pack and the Administration. And Mr. Pack has received most of the attention here this morning and rightfully so. He has violated a subpoena in an arrogant manner, a lawful subpoena, and you are struck with the irony here that the CEO who defies the rule of law here at home is in charge of an agency that is missioned with promoting the tenet of democracy, of rule of law, globally.

But, you know, I want to get to the bottom of this because he deserves his criticism here, certainly, and more so, but he was not put there alone. He was not given the power to be there by himself and he would not continue to act like this without support from the Administration.

And I noticed in the testimony this morning there was reference to things, for instance, the heart of the attack of the Trump Administration, so I want to ask our witnesses to give a little more testimony to what these attacks have been so I can get a better understanding. This is not just one person acting alone. When witnesses have mentioned this kind of action, these kinds of attacks on the Agency, could you explore what they are for everyone that is listening?

Mr. TURNER. I can probably add one—

Mr. KEATING. Probably Mr. Fly can—

Mr. TURNER. I can probably add one item which I think is relevant and it has to do with the J-1 visa holders that, you know, that we were told by an individual who is, you know, in Mr. Pack's team that, you know, it was largely to be in alignment with the White House's immigration policies, you know, rather than connected to the needs of the Agency, and, really, the damage that could be done to a lot of our services if these critical skill sets went away. So I think, you know, there is an example of one instance where, you know, there is, I think, this connection.

Mr. KEATING. It was not about the mission of the Agency. It was about other broader White House policy that had been referenced; is that correct?

Mr. TURNER. That is correct, Congressman.

Mr. KEATING. Like immigration.

Mr. TURNER. Yes.

Anyone else want to comment on these kind of attacks? Because we do not want to put this morning's focus just on the fact that there is a person in place. They are there for a reason. They are doing things for a reason.

Mr. FLY. Congressman, I would just add, I mean, I think I referenced Trump Administration attacks, although I might let Amanda speak more about that. But what I was referencing was that the President's own direct attacks on Voice of America which obviously led up to the confirmation of Michael Pack. Obviously, I was running RFE/RL which was not directly attacked by the President, but it still was an attack on the Agency and, ultimately, on the credibility of our journalists.

The one final thing I will just say, I mean, look, I am a lifelong Republican. I do not believe that Mr. Pack's agenda is a coordinated strategy that encompasses the entire Administration. As I testified, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was on the USAGM board and including our corporate boards until Michael Pack dismissed him the same night he removed the network heads. Secretary of State Pompeo or his representatives fully supported the reform agenda that many of us were pushing at the network.

Mr. KEATING. Well, then if I could, because our time is very short, then it must be someone above Mr. Pompeo that is bolstering him, which leads us to whether it is Mr. Miller, because of immigration, or the President himself. And you made reference to the President's own remarks, so I understand the distinction between the support perhaps of the Secretary of State, but he is not calling the shots.

And we know what it is not. We heard from one of our colleagues, oh, it was lack of security, Zoom, even though you do not

use Zoom. It was hard drives, even though you use the cloud. You do not use hard drives. It was concerns about security, even though there is more egregious breaches of security right in the White House with Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner and the President himself using an unsecured phone. So we know what it is not.

But I want to quickly go to the greater concern too. Ambassador Crocker, who I respect enormously and have had occasion to deal with him in other capacities, mentioned the threat to national security. Can you take a few minutes at the end of this to comment on the threat of, really, undercutting this Agency to our Nation's security?

Ambassador Crocker, if you are still there, or anyone?

Mr. CROCKER. I am here, sir. The logic that lay behind the founding of VOA in the dark days of World War II was our national security, very directly, very clearly, and that is set by reference that initial broadcast. In just a few words, Mr. Hale, I think, summarized the strategic logic of the creation of VOA and its continuing mission today along with the other entities and grantees.

It is an ugly world out there as you know, sir. You visited—

Mr. KEATING. Well, thank you. If I could, you are breaking up and my time is running out. But I would say it is so relevant today in that regard. I just—it was just days ago that I was on a broadcast and a briefing with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya from Lithuania and she was commenting on the importance when—we were talking about what the U.S. can do of the kind of functions you are talking about, and your Agency truly represents not what they are being threatened to be turned into by this Administration and Mr. Pack. I yield back.

Ms. BENNETT. Mr. Chairman, may I respond since my name was mentioned? This is Amanda Bennett.

Mr. ENGEL. Certainly.

Ms. BENNETT. I would like to thank the Congressman for his question and just reiterate that yes, as Mr. Fly noted, I was the subject of some—or my agency was the subject of some attacks.

But I would just like to say that for me the issue—that raises the issue of the strength of the firewall. I do not know of any Administration that is happy with the coverage that the media gives of them, ever, in the history of Administrations, and so the fact that the President might have something to complain about or be unhappy about with the coverage is nothing new.

But the ability to then have anyone reach in and alter that coverage is the real problem here. Everyone should be free to have their own opinions, but VOA and the other agencies, the other entities within the USAGM Agency have been, traditionally, completely independent of such scrutiny and actions. And that is what I think is important for us to focus on that—

Mr. KEATING. And that I have put in my amendment.

Ms. BENNETT. Thank you for doing so.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much.

Mr. Cicilline.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for conducting this hearing, and I thank the ranking member, Mr. McCaul, for his really thoughtful remarks as well.

Thank you to our witnesses for your extraordinary courage. And this is a deeply disturbing set of events in this happening at USAGM. And, you know, the power of the truth and the ability to ensure that trustworthy, reliable news is provided is essential, obviously, to freedom and democracy here and around the world. And the idea that an agency which has done this so, such important work for so long is now under attack by this Administration, sadly, is just one more example of breaking important norms.

So, Mr. Turner, I want to start with you. You said that it was clear to you after several weeks that Mr. Pack did not come to the Agency to run it. I am wondering if it was clear to you what he came to the Agency to do.

Mr. TURNER. You know, I still have not settled on that because, you know, no real strategy has emerged. He removed, you know, all of the network heads and he had a rather long confirmation process. So if he had people in mind to replace them, I would think he would have, you know, advanced those, you know, those individuals.

I do not think he came to run it because to me it does not feel like he is engaged in it. He has not wanted to fund parts of it, you know, it has been about starving the organization of resources, whether it is, you know, people, money.

Mr. CICILLINE. Yes. So, Mr. Turner, I guess that is my question. When you do not fill positions and you remove people from positions and you starve grantees, you do not run the Agency, you actually stop it from doing its work which it seems like was at least the result of his conduct.

Ms. Bennett, I want to ask you, you know, you spoke very powerfully about the importance of the firewall. And I wonder if you would describe what the consequences are when you have these serious violations in the firewall repeatedly. What that does to the confidence that people have of what is being reported and the morale of the news reporting agencies and the impact on our efforts to strengthen the free press and democracy here and around the world.

Ms. BENNETT. Well, again, since I have not been there during any period after my leadership ended, I can speak in general. However, in saying that as I said in the beginning, the thing that distinguishes Voice of America, the thing that distinguishes American broadcasting from the propaganda efforts of the authoritarian regimes that we cover is the fact that we are known to be and are in practice separate from any Administration, this Administration or any Administration.

Any kind of attempts to regulate the output of the media by any Administration would be unwelcome and would be damaging to the reputation of the journalists and the journalism. And so if you want to look at the single thing that separates us from propaganda, it is that independence, the ability to report things without a reference to whoever is in power.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you.

Ambassador Kornbluh, you spoke about the impact of the sort of ending or preventing funding to OTF as a result of Mr. Pack's direction. Can you speak about what were the implications on the work and, more broadly, what is the consequence of the kind of

intervention that this Administration has attempted to impose on the operations, the breaking of the firewall in terms of the mission of the Agency and, frankly, who benefits from this conduct that diminishes the American voice around the world?

Ms. KORNBLUH. Thank you, Congressman. And thank you for your leadership on technology issues, so I know that you know the importance of this internet freedom work.

You know, I could go through the specific implications in Hong Kong where OTF has a long history of supporting internet freedom efforts and was poised to expand its efforts in Hong Kong, but it was going to surge support for circumvention tools and expand support for digital training and then USAGM froze and continues to withhold its funding and did that just weeks before the new security laws came into effect, so OTF has not been able to support any of these efforts.

I talked about Belarus. Iran, we have a similar heartbreaking story, and so on and so on. And so I think, you know, there are agreed-upon U.S. foreign policy and national security priorities which OTF, this tiny organization, this bipartisan success story, has furthered, you know, behind the scenes in its quiet, powerful way working with civil society groups, technologists and so on around the world and now it is weakened. Not only does it not have the funding to do that, but there have been attacks on it, on its reputation, on its security that are just unfounded that really, you know, will weaken its reputation into the future even if the funding is restored.

So to your question about who does it help and who does it harm, it harms us. It harms the United States. It harms people who support democracy and democratic values around the world. And, unfortunately, it strengthens authoritarians.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you so much. You know, Mr. Pack's conduct is a gift to our adversaries. It is shocking. And when you think about the strategic national security and geopolitical consequences of the undermining of the important work of these agencies and then the cowardly failure of Mr. Pack to come and defend his just horrific behavior undermining the core responsibilities that he has and to think that he is being paid by the taxpayers of this country and does not have the decency to comply with a lawful subpoena and answer for his conduct, to me, says it all.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Cicilline.

Mr. Castro.

Mr. CASTRO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that I have been running around to three committee hearings today, so if I retread some ground that we have covered, please forgive me.

But to justify his decision to revoke the visas of foreign journalists working with VOA Michael Pack claimed that they might be spies. He presented zero evidence to back up this claim, however. I find the use of the term "spies" extremely interesting. For decades, authoritarian States have used this exact term to discredit or target journalists working for USAGM grantees.

And so I want to ask the panel, do you believe a U.S. official claiming VOA journalists are spies helps authoritarian govern-

ments discredit the work of USAGM's grantees? And I open that up to anyone on the panel.

Mr. FLY. I will just jump in. Even, I think Mr. Pack's comments were primarily about VOA, but I will just say having run RFE/RL, it is incredibly demoralizing for the journalists of an entity like RFE/RL to hear the head of USAGM making such comments, especially given as you noted that these are the same slurs that are hurled at them by the Kremlin, by authoritarian regimes wherever they operate, and they are often accusations that are weaponized as they are captured or as I mentioned before with our colleagues in Belarus, thrown into prison.

And so it is incredibly dangerous for the USAGM head to start basically writing the press release that the Kremlin can then turn around and use the next week about USAGM journalists.

Mr. CASTRO. Thank you.

Mr. TURNER. I cannot say it any better than Jamie that that is exactly my same sentiment. To use that term against reporters creates incredible danger. It is so irresponsible and it shows how little he knows about this Agency.

Mr. CASTRO. And also the unceremonious dumping of journalists was quite bizarre, actually. The way that it was handled was very much what we would see in other countries with authoritarian rulers or nations that do not exactly follow the rule of law.

But I want to ask you, you know, right now our country is facing a global information war from countries such as Russia and China and others, and our best defense from their misinformation campaigns is to provide objective, fact-based reporting so people around the world have access to truthful information.

Outlets like Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Asia, Voice of America, and the others are uniquely suited to be on the front lines of that battle. So how do the changes that Mr. Pack has made impact our ability to combat the misinformation campaigns of adversaries like Russia? And I would note that this includes, it includes inserting partisanship into USAGM and firing foreign journalists who have a better sense of how to appeal to target audiences abroad.

Mr. CROCKER. Yes. This is Ryan Crocker. Can you hear me?

Mr. CASTRO. Yes.

Mr. CROCKER. Very briefly, the steps that have been taken and the rhetoric that has been used not only discredits USAGM as an objective source of news, the reputation that was very hard-earned and many have fought to maintain, it also endangers. I was a career field guy in some of the rougher parts of the world. To assert that spies of foreign intelligence agencies have infiltrated the establishment not only discredits the reputation for honesty, it puts everyone out there in the field at danger.

Words have consequences and to make this unfounded assertion risks the very lives of our correspondence overseas in some very tough places. It puts them physically at risk.

Mr. CASTRO. No, and I have just a few seconds left, but I think that that is a very important point that Mr. Pack, without evidence, has made libelous claims, really, that were these journalists to go get a job somewhere else in another country could threaten not only their livelihoods but their safety.

When somebody from the U.S. Government has labeled a journalist a spy, who is going to go trust them in another country? Who is going to go hire them somewhere else? This man has acted incredibly recklessly and even for that alone he should be dismissed from his job.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Castro. Your time is expired.

We now go to Ms. Titus.

Ms. TITUS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have enjoyed and learned a lot from listening to this hearing. I appreciate you holding it.

Just to followup on some of the things that have already been mentioned, we have seen governments use a technicality in law to punish, imprison, or endanger journalists. We have seen governments accusing journalists of being spies as ways of curtailing them or having a chilling effect on journalists. Now we are seeing a general backsliding of democracy in the Eastern Europe and parts of Asia and along with that comes kind of the predictable crackdown on journalists.

Because of COVID, we know that the spread of misinformation is even more dangerous, so I wonder how your organizations are dealing with that new element and what Mr. Pack's actions have, or how Mr. Pack's actions have had an effect on your ability to respond to this new threat.

Ms. BENNETT. This is Amanda and I can, Amanda Bennett, and I can answer the first half of that question. Perhaps someone else could answer the second half. I think it is demonstrable that in an era when there is just a flood of mis-and disinformation that the most powerful obstacle to that mis-and disinformation is to flood the zone with accurate information.

And one thing I found particularly heartwarming in my tenure as VOA director is we did a lot of interactive work with our audiences, and to listen to our audiences say that they came to us because they could believe what they—that we said. That they could see what was happening in their own countries and that we were the ones that they came to, to tell the truth about it, particularly if you think about during the coronavirus.

During the coronavirus, VOA in particular, and I know my colleagues at the other organizations did as well, very quickly spun up panels of global physicians to answer questions and give accurate information. Those were extremely well subscribed and as was pointed out at the very beginning of this hearing went viral in those countries, that information.

Doing that kind of work is absolutely critical, particularly in this era of mis-and disinformation.

Ms. TITUS. Thank you. Anybody else?

Ms. KORNBLUH. Yes, I would love to weigh in as well.

Part of this information warfare that you alluded to is that we are in a battle with China, especially, and to some extent Russia and Iran and others, over whether there is going to be an internet with national governments able to censor and surveil or whether there is going to be a U.S. model where there is open ability to access information.

And OTF has been on the front lines of this, so I will give you an example of some of the technology they were working on. OTF

was incubating an AI-powered circumvention engine called Geneva that would have dynamically used censorship evasion techniques faster than China's censorship apparatus. Adjust get past the firewall and access the internet, access VOA information or RFE/RL information and so on.

And in just a matter of months, the project produced over 60 viable means of circumvention, a process that would have previously taken years. That kind of innovation has now been put on hold because of these actions.

Ms. TITUS. Let me ask you this too. We have got an Administration that does not even believe our own scientists so that should be a problem for you, but also a President who just enjoys attacking the press. He does it at rallies and at press conferences, encourages people to beat up the press. He calls members of the press names, he demeans their work, and he started this international mantra about fake news.

Was that part of Mr. Pack's agenda and how does that affect your attempt to get out there real news? Anybody?

Ms. KORNBLUH. I will just say one thing—

Mr. TURNER. I can say that—

Ms. KORNBLUH. Oh, go ahead, Grant.

Mr. TURNER. I will just offer this really quickly that certainly, you know, Mr. Pack has talked about, you know, draining the swamp and, you know, he has just sort of that, you know, that viewpoint and he seems to think that the swamp extends to, you know, to USAGM. So it gives you a little bit of an inkling of, you know, what he thinks about the place right now.

Ms. KORNBLUH. I wanted to say based on my time on the broader board of USAGM is that part of what these entities do is they model what a free press is around the world. So they get good information into these repressive societies, but they also show what a free press is. And that is one of the values that the U.S. has shown around the world, what can a free press be.

And I think you are hearing the importance of upholding that value and talking about the importance of the free press internationally and the kind of harm that can be done when we denigrate it.

Ms. TITUS. Exactly. It is an institution that should be protected, not denigrated as you say. You said that he was not there to run the Agency. I think it is pretty clear he was there to run it in the ground.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Ms. Titus.

Mr. Espaillat.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to all the presenters. To Mr. Fly, can you explain how Russia's foreign agent law has impacted Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty and how we can work to overcome any challenges brought about by this law?

Mr. FLY. Thanks for the question, Congressman.

And Russia's actions to try to tighten regulations around the media have had significant impact on Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and our ability to reach a Russian audience. They passed this foreign agent law a number of years ago which made RFE/RL

register as a foreign agent, basically having to say publicly that we represent foreign interests, which is not the case inside Russia given that our journalists inside Russia are actually Russian citizens reporting on their own societies with full editorial independence as we have discussed many times during this hearing.

And they have now taken that to a new level of passing a law that allows the designation of individual journalists as foreign agents, basically labeling individual journalists as spies. And, thankfully, they have not yet implemented that law, but it is hanging over the heads of our entire network of journalists inside Russia.

And we have tried to do our best to continue to provide objective news and information to the Russian people, but this is one of those issues as well where our RFE/RL would be looking to responsible leadership at USAGM to work with the State Department and with the U.S. Government and Members of Congress to help RFE/RL be able to maintain that presence inside Russia. So this is going to be an ongoing problem, I fear, in the years to come.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. And besides the foreign agent law, what would you say is the most serious and most pronounced effort by the Russians to try to cripple our efforts to promote democracy across Europe and the former Soviet Union?

Mr. FLY. Well, inside Russia itself, one of the biggest challenges I faced and was trying to move the organization forward was to just get access to the Russian audience. Over the years, the Russian Government has slowly limited RFE/RL's ability to get content on the airwaves. It has stripped RFE/RL of radio licenses. It has blocked its 24/7 Russian language network from going on satellite packages.

Really, the primary way that RFE/RL reaches the Russian audience right now is digital. And because of some of the internet issues that we have discussed earlier, the Russian Government has even threatened to curtail that. So that was my biggest concern where I was trying to move RFE/RL forward to just expanding our access.

Some of that requires a broader conversation, I believe, between the U.S. Government and the Russian Government about the way that Russian media, Russian State-funded and State-directed media are treated in the United States, because Russia Today and Sputnik do not face any of the limitations that I just described about reaching an American audience. They can access every American if they want to through multiple platforms, and right now the Russian Government has blocked RFE/RL and VOA from being able to do that.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. And what do you think the credibility issues would be if broadcasters sort of like became perceived as propaganda outlets, you know, what is the impact, the overall impact in terms of credibility, the longstanding credibility if this were to happen?

Mr. FLY. Well, for RFE/RL, I cannot speak for the others, but it completely undermines the confidence of the audience. And if there are questions that, serious questions of credibility that are raised about RFE/RL's objectivity and independence, the audience will go elsewhere. It is an incredibly competitive media environment right

now, especially through digital platforms and even in some of these closed societies they have other places to go to get news and information. Now it will not always be independent and factual, but they will go elsewhere and that is really what is at risk.

You know, at least with RFE/RL and its services what I saw is the connection between the audience and the network is incredibly personal. It is emotional. People trust the correspondence. They trust the anchors. And as soon as they think that those journalists are not able to do their job independently, they may be tempted to go elsewhere, which would really be sacrificing an important tool that has been developed over decades.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Thank you all.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Espailat.

Ms. Omar.

Ms. OMAR. Thank you, Chairman. And thank you for holding this hearing.

Ms. Bennett, I just wanted to get a few facts on the table. Is it correct that VOA needs to maintain political independence and neutrality?

Ms. BENNETT. Yes, that is correct.

Ms. OMAR. And is it correct the VOA is not supposed to target American audience with its programming?

Ms. BENNETT. That is also correct. Incidental acquisition of the content is permitted because it is very difficult, of course, to throttle the internet. But yes, targeting the United States audience is not permitted.

Ms. OMAR. Thank you.

Mr. Turner, before he was appointed as CEO of USAGM, the only thing most people knew about Mr. Michael Pack is that he used to make movies with Stephen Bannon. Mr. Bannon is a long critic of USAGM, admitting to the L.A. Times that he told the President long ago that Trump did not need to start a new government network to push out the MAGA talking points. You got one, Mr. Bannon said, and he argued that it was called the Voice of America.

Now Mr. Bannon is long gone from government, thankfully, but the Trump Administration remains intent on getting Mr. Pack installed so quickly before the election. And this is why I was so disturbed by a protected whistleblower disclosure that you submitted to the Office of the Inspector General. Do you recall that document?

Mr. TURNER. Yes, Congresswoman, I do.

Ms. OMAR. OK. And in that disclosure, which details numerous abuses and potential illegal actions by Mr. Pack and his team, two things really stood out to me. One is that you disclosed to the IG that Mr. Pack required USAGM networks to carry out a link to editorial pages on each of those websites with a variety of press releases and other Administration-produced information from the Department of UGS.

Mr. TURNER. Correct.

Ms. OMAR. First, why was that so disturbing to you that you needed to disclose that?

Mr. TURNER. It gets at, really, the heart of the firewall and the independence of the organizations. You know, part of our mission

is to help communicate and help people around the world to understand the policy positions of our government. What is the Administration thinking about? What is the Congress thinking about? That is why we cover hearings, you know, that is a big part of our job.

But dictating how the news is to be delivered breaches that firewall. Ordering each of our networks to carry the Administration's content in a prescribed way is a breach of that firewall and that is why I wanted to disclose it.

Ms. OMAR. And, second, why was Mr. Pack so focused on using the organization to push out the Administration's talking points?

Mr. TURNER. You know, I am not entirely sure. You know, I think it is the one maybe concrete thing that I have seen him do is insert, you know, these editorials into each of the networks. So I suspect it was on his list of things he wanted to do.

Ms. OMAR. And the other thing that you disclosed was that Mr. Pack directed members of his team to participate in VOA's planning meetings for coverage of the upcoming elections. Why was that something you felt you needed to disclose?

Mr. TURNER. Once again, just, you know, a horrible breach of the firewall. You know, I think the last, you know, things that people in this committee would want is, you know, someone from the opposing party inserting, you know, their people into the planning meetings for the coverage of the upcoming Presidential election.

You know, it runs, you know, one way this year, but eventually the shoe is on the other foot. And I think that is why when we operated under a bipartisan board, things, you know, were quite balanced. If you look at the body of work that our organization puts out, it is very balanced. So it—VOA said no to that request and there are strong reporters there who have strong journalistic principles and they resisted it.

But to one by one take out the strong people and intimidate the others, that is, I think, a long-term question.

Ms. OMAR. Well, we are thankful for that refusal. There is danger when VOA is seen as a propaganda arm of any Administration, and as we do our work outside of the country our credibility is important and so I appreciate you for your bravery and I appreciate every single person who is putting their life on the line in honestly reporting the news.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you.

Mr. ENGEL. The gentlewoman's time has expired.

Mr. Phillips.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to all of you, to our witnesses for appearing in front of us today. So many of my colleagues almost universally have shared their mutual perspective of disappointment that Mr. Pack has chosen not to honor his commitment to testify in front of us, so we appreciate your time and, frankly, your courage.

Jefferson once said that if he had to choose between a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, he would not hesitate a moment to choose the latter. Our founders knew that a free press was vital to an open democratic society, and USAGM was founded on those very principles and now its networks, of course, reach more than 350 million people all around the world.

I could not say it better than its own mission statement, “The five media organizations that comprise USAGM complement and reinforce one another in a shared mission vital to U.S. national interests to inform, to engage, and to connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy.” So it is clear to me that all of you, all of our witnesses here today adhere to those very values and are committed to the pursuit in support of this mission.

And that is why I have watched with such alarm as Mr. Pack has compromised so many of these core elements. To name a few, attempting to withhold funding from and cripple programs of national security interests to the United States; making public comments about foregoing COVID protections for employees in an effort to “drain the swamp;” dismissing lawyers who advised him on the importance of a firewall that legally protects VOA’s legally mandated editorial independence, among many other things.

So my first question is to you, Mr. Crocker, about that role of political appointees, the role that they can and should play in the governance of USAGM. So please tell us, what is the specific role of the various boards of directors of the services?

Mr. CROCKER. Thank you, Congressman, for that excellent question. The board of USAGM, and Ambassador Kornbluh and I were two of its members, that board was dissolved effective with the first Presidentially nominated, Senate-confirmed CEO, Michael Pack, as soon as he was sworn in. We expected that. That was in a conversation that the Hill had.

But what we did not expect was the wholesale dismissal of the mirror boards for the entities and grantees. One of the important changes of the board on which I was privileged to serve was to ensure that board membership across all of the entities and agencies was the same as the USAGM board. That gave us a common perspective. It gave us the opportunity to ensure coherent decision-making.

So the entity and grantee boards again identical to the broader USAGM board was to oversee the functioning of the entities, to ask the hard questions and then in particular to approve resource allocations. We were all prepared, I think, to carry on as necessary on those boards to assist with the process of transition. We were all summarily dismissed.

So in addition to the problems we have seen since June, you quite correctly add to it this: It is not simply that the CEOs were all dismissed, we have covered that at length here, a huge hit to our entire mission effort, but also the boards that had continuity and oversight. So effectively, as Mr. Fly and others just said, these ships no longer have rudders and it is a very, very dangerous development.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Thank you, Mr. Crocker. You know, you all know too well that Mr. Pack has replaced boards, replaced members of the boards with himself, his chief of staff, Trump political appointees with other agencies, even the senior counsel of an organization at the Southern Poverty Law Center as designated an anti-LGBTQ hate group.

So, Mr. Fly, a question for you, quickly. What impact does that have on USAGM’s employees, the culture, and the atmosphere inside?

Mr. FLY. It is incredibly dangerous. And I outlined in my written testimony at least in the case of RFE/RL the statute, despite the additional powers given to the CEO, specifically requires that the corporate board of RFE/RL make all personnel decisions related to officers. I have no evidence that the RFE/RL corporate board, the new corporate board that Mr. Pack appointed, ever even discussed my termination. I have never met any of the other board members other than Mr. Pack, so I do not know how they would follow their fiduciary obligations to the company under Delaware law where it is incorporated.

And the final thing I will just note, I have concerns about the fact that the board of each of the grantees is now a majority Federal board. There is only one non-Federal member on that board. The statute, and I have it right in front of me, says specifically that the statute is not to make any of the grantees a Federal agency or instrumentality.

I do not know how that is maintained when you have a corporate board of each of the grantees that is made up of a majority of Federal officials. So I think there is a whole host of issues here that have not been explored yet that should be explored because I think they have significant long-term consequences for the independence of each of the grantees.

Mr. PHILLIPS. I wholeheartedly agree and—

Mr. ENGEL. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. PHILLIPS [continuing]. Thank you. I yield back. Thank you. Thank you all for your courage.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Ms. Houlahan.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thank you all here present and also virtually for your very, I think, brave testimony. I will also apologize in case this question has been asked and answered. But I would love to know, first, from Ms. Bennett, if you could help us understand why there are so many journalists who are foreign nationals in Voice of America and what particular skills do they bring to the work?

And also if you would enlighten us a little bit more about the recruitment process for these journalists and what draws them to the work sometimes, of course, risking their lives to do so.

Ms. BENNETT. Yes. Thank you very much for that question. The journalists that come here from other countries bring, really, unique skills that are very, very hard to find. And we know this because before we recruit anyone from the outside, we are required to advertise extensively within the United States looking for these skills. And over years and years it has proved very difficult to find people with excellent journalistic skills, native and colloquial command of a language that can be used in a broadcasting platform, so—and also people with journalistic skills and context and understanding of the countries in which they broadcast.

These are unbelievably difficult things to find. The people that come to us to the Voice of America to broadcast see this as a career move because of the reputation that Voice of America has both in their countries and around the world, so to be able to come and work at the Voice of America is both a tremendous honor and a tremendous risk each of them is undertaking.

As has been mentioned previously here, it is a security and safety risk for many of these people because the countries that we are broadcasting to and recruiting from are largely authoritarian countries that do not welcome the Voice of America or Radio Free Europe or Radio Free Asia broadcasting there. So the journalists that come here are both highly skilled, highly knowledgeable, and highly courageous and perform a very vital function within the broadcast of all of us.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you. I very much appreciate that insight. This next question is for you as well as for Mr. Fly, and I think that Mr. Phillips also asked a similar question. But I would be interested to know what you are perceiving the morale of everybody to be underneath these very, very difficult circumstances, if you could comment on that, please.

Let's start with Mr. Turner.

Mr. TURNER. I do have contact with, you know, folks who have reached out to me and it seems like it is pretty bad. It is sad. Mr. Pack said one of his first, one of his goals was to raise morale and it is completely the opposite. I mean his actions have created a chilling effect. It is intimidating people. People are afraid, you know, for the jobs. People are afraid that they are going to have to leave the country as you had pointed out and go back to potentially, really, you know, unwelcome receptions due to the work that they have done for us. So it is pretty bad.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Ms. Bennett, would you like to add to that?

Ms. BENNETT. I think I would like to discuss it in the opposite effect which is that during the time up until our departure, the leaders of the organizations, we found that our morale had increased substantially because of the dedication and devotion of the journalists to their mission. And so for those of us who felt like our mission was to remove obstacles and to clear the path for them to operate more effectively, we found that that improved the morale. We at VOA actually surveyed the morale and discovered that, you know, between 2016 to the previous year, this current year, morale increased from 46 percent of people believing that they were generally satisfied with the organization to over 70 percent. That is a pretty big jump and I attribute that completely to the dedication that people had to the mission and their appreciation of the fact that they felt that the mission was being supported.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thanks. And with the last 30 or so seconds of my time, I was wondering. You clearly, I hope, have heard that there is an enormous amount of support bipartisanly for the mission of USAGM and as we try as a Congress to continue our responsibility of oversight, what kind of reforms do you believe that could be made at the Agency and how could Congress be helpful in those reforms as well?

I will start with Mr. Turner since he is in front of me and shaking his head.

Mr. TURNER. You know, as we kind of entered on this experiment of having our first Presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed CEO, we did not quite know what to expect and I think everyone thought, you know, kind of a reasonable person theory that, you know, you get reasonable people, the government structure that was created would work. It certainly does not feel like it is working

very well right now. I think there are a lot of people, you know, with ideas about what, you know, reform could take place.

I mentioned our former general counsel, David Kligerman, who is very knowledgeable and I know would be very happy to, you know, to assist anyone. You know, there is a thing about, you know, do not tear down a fence until you know why someone put it up, and I think that is the case here. You know, we had a bipartisan board and it worked, so maybe going back to that might help.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you.

I apologize for going over and I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Ms. Houlahan.

Mr. Malinowski.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I wanted to start with a question that I think will help illuminate the value of these broadcast agencies. We have talked about Belarus quite a bit as a current example and I just wanted to ask Mr. Fly to confirm that RFE and Radio Svaboda, they are covering this crisis every single day, basically, 24/7; is that correct?

Mr. FLY. Yes. Yes, and often as I noted before, getting arrested while doing it.

Mr. ENGEL. Right. And CNN is not broadcasting 24/7 from Belarus. Fox News is not. The Times is not doing 12 stories a day on its front page, or any other major newspaper, right, so this is a unique service that the rest of the international media just does not have the resources to provide. Is that—

Mr. FLY. Yes, especially in Belarusian, which is what Svaboda is broadcasting in, there are several other private competitors but, obviously, their primary competitor is Belarusian State TV. It is Lukashenko's propagandism now buttressed by RT apparatchiks sent from Moscow.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Right. And just very briefly, like what is the difference between our coverage and RT? Why do people want to, people in Belarus want to listen to our service?

Mr. FLY. Because over decades they have built up confidence amongst the audience and respect because they know Svaboda stands for truth. And there have even been videos during the protests of them seeing the Svaboda journalists covering the protests and the crowd starting to chant, "Svaboda, Svaboda." There is an emotional attachment to the brand.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Well, it is that notion of truth. And I will, you know, tell you as sort of a personal experience, I was born in Poland and my family once told me the story of like 1960's, Polish State television, Communist television which show these images of our civil rights protests in the American South, thinking that it would turn people against America because there is violence, people protesting for their rights being put down by riot police.

And it had exactly the opposite effect, because actually seeing the truth about Americans being able to protest injustice convinced people in Poland that actually, you know, this is a place—this is a system that we would like to have in our country. And so this notion that telling the truth whether the news about America is good or bad, being valuable to our interests, I think, is central to this discussion.

Mr. Turner, I am sure you are aware that Mr. Pack has a long-standing association with Steve Bannon and that before his appointment, Pack's appointment, Mr. Bannon was pushing this appointment as a way of trying to ensure that these broadcast agencies were promoting the President's America First agenda around the world, that it would compete with CNN, he said.

A, is that appropriate, and B, after Mr. Pack's arrival, did you see any sign that that was in fact his motivation?

Mr. TURNER. Thank you. It is certainly not appropriate. I think there have been windows into that. The firewall breaches with, you know, trying to insert, you know, political leadership or his operatives into planning sessions for VOA's coverage of a Presidential election, I think, is an indication of how, you know, they would like things to work.

As of now, I think each of the grantees and VOA are showing, you know, what high-quality reporting takes place there. You know, they are excellent journalists and they are standing strong. I know that many of them have been asked to compromise and there have been lots of intimidation. I think the worry is as Mr. Pack's tenure continues to remove the strongest of the strong, to wear down the others, does intimidation permeate the organizations, and it is the trajectory I really worry about.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Well, I would—look, I would say if President Joe Biden were to appoint somebody to this position with the charge of competing with Fox News or promoting the Biden Administration's vision of the world, I would be just as upset. It would be just as damaging—

Mr. TURNER. Yes.

Mr. MALINOWSKI [continuing]. To the integrity of this institution. And let me just say, you know, we have heard a lot about a lot of paranoia coming from this man about foreign spies infiltrating USAGM. And I would say, you know, I would never accuse somebody of consciously serving foreign interests without evidence to back that charge, but if China, Russia, North Korea, or any of our adversaries had, in fact, infiltrated USAGM, they could not possibly have done more harm to America's interests than Mr. Pack has, in fact, done on his own. Thank you and I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Okay. The gentleman's time has expired and that concludes the questioning. I want to thank our witnesses for very important testimony. I want to thank our members for being—sticking here and almost everybody on the committee asked a question.

And this is certainly something that we are going to continue to pursue as time moves on, so thanks to everybody that participated and the hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:15 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

Eliot L. Engel (D-NY), Chairman

September 24, 2020

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building. Pursuant to H. Res. 965, Members who wish to participate remotely may do so via Cisco WebEx. The hearing is available by live webcast on the Committee website at <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/>.

DATE: Thursday, September 24, 2020

TIME: 10:00 a.m., EDT

LOCATION: 2172 Rayburn House Office Building

SUBJECT: Oversight of the United States Agency for Global Media and U.S. International Broadcasting Efforts

WITNESS: Panel I

The Honorable Michael Pack (subpoenaed)
Chief Executive Officer
United States Agency for Global Media

Panel II

The Honorable Karen Kombluh
Chair of the Board of Directors
Open Technology Fund
(Former U.S. Ambassador to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development)

Ms. Amanda Bennett
Former Director of the Voice of America

Mr. Jamie Fly
Former President of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

Mr. Grant Turner

Chief Financial Officer
U.S. Agency for Global Media

The Honorable Ryan Crocker
Board Member
Open Technology Fund
(Former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Kuwait,
and Lebanon)

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

FULL COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
X	Eliot L. Engel, NY
X	Brad Sherman, CA
X	Gregory W. Meeks, NY
X	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerald E. Connolly, VA
X	Theodore E. Deutch, FL
X	Karen Bass, CA
X	William Keating, MA
X	David Cicilline, RI
	Ami Bera, CA
X	Joaquin Castro, TX
X	Dina Titus, NV
X	Adriano Espaillat, NY
	Ted Lieu, CA
X	Susan Wild, PA
X	Dean Phillips, MN
X	Ilhan Omar, MN
	Colin Allred, TX
	Andy Levin, MI
	Abigail Spanberger, VA
X	Chrissy Houlahan, PA
X	Tom Malinowski, NJ
	David Trone, MD
	Jim Costa, CA
X	Juan Vargas, CA
X	Vicente Gonzalez, TX

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
X	Michael T. McCaul, TX
X	Christopher H. Smith, NJ
X	Steve Chabot, OH
	Joe Wilson, SC
X	Scott Perry, PA
	Ted Yoho, FL
X	Adam Kinzinger, IL
X	Lee Zeldin, NY
	James Sensenbrenner, Jr., WI
X	Ann Wagner, MO
	Brian J. Mast, FL
	Francis Rooney, FL
X	Brian K. Fitzpatrick, PA
X	John Curtis, UT
X	Ken Buck, CO
	Ron Wright, TX
	Guy Reschenthaler, PA
X	Tim Burchett, TN
	Greg Pence, IN
	Michael Guest, MS
X	Mark Green, TN

CONNELLY STATEMENT

**“Oversight of the United States Agency for Global Media and U.S. International
Broadcasting Efforts”
Committee on Foreign Affairs
10:00 AM, Thursday, September 24, 2020
Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA)**

“To inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy.” That is the mission of the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM). “To remain rigorously committed to objective journalism and the firewall protecting journalists and content from political influence remains in place.” That is the operating principle upon which USAGM leadership, career professionals, and global network of journalists have relied on for decades in service of more than 350 million people across the globe.

Just weeks into the job, Mr. Michael Pack -- who refused to appear before this committee under subpoena -- has managed to destroy the proud history, tradition, and successes of the USAGM by purging the agency of career professionals and celebrated journalists and filling leadership roles with himself and Trump’s yes men.

The power and influence of USAGM depends entirely on its credibility, which in turn relies on its journalistic objectivity, editorial independence, and separation from government. Starting with the creation of the Voice of America (VAO) nearly 75 years ago, U.S. civilian international broadcasting offers independent, fact-based reporting through five constituent entities and the Open Technology Fund (OTF). These five entities -- VAO, the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Radio Free Asia (RFA), the Middle East Broadcasting Network (MBN) -- deliver credible news in local media environments that are otherwise manipulated, if not completely captured, by governments and oligarchs. In an age where China, Russia, and other one-party authoritarian regimes are seeking to export anti-democratic values and expand their global influence through misinformation, disinformation, and news manipulation, we need U.S. international broadcasting in countering these malign efforts.

As the first CEO under the new governing structure, Mr. Pack is not only setting a dangerous precedent but actively seeking to weaken and hollow the institution from within. He fired the chiefs of the four constituent entities and the OTF and replaced their boards with President Trump’s political appointees, revoked delegations of authority from senior officials, and suspended career public servants under the pretext of security. Not stopping there, Pack directly put the lives of at least 16 VOA journalists at risk by refusing to renew their work visas, effectively forcing them to return to countries where they may become political targets. Through his words and actions, Pack is following an all too familiar playbook created by this White House and dutifully carried out by Trump’s appointees across multiple U.S. federal agencies.

The rot starts at the top. When the President himself makes a mockery of journalistic professionalism and integrity by describing the mistreatment of U.S. journalists as a “beautiful sight,” we can expect no less of his appointees. We know that Mr. Pack’s attacks on the VOA were in direct response to President Trump’s criticism of the media outlet, and his purge of USAGM is yet another example of a culture of impunity in the Trump Administration.

This pattern of abuse must stop. Congress must act decisively to protect the USAGM from being exploited and turned into a political mouthpiece of the Trump Administration. I echo my colleagues in calling for an immediate IG investigation into these potentially unlawful acts by Mr. Pack. I thank you Ambassadors Kornbluh and Crocker, Ms. Bennett, Mr. Turner, and Mr. Fly for your service to the USAGM and your courage in appearing before this committee today. I look forward to hearing your testimonies and recommendations.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

**Questions for the Record Submitted from Representative Sires
“Oversight of the United States Agency for Global Media and U.S. International
Broadcasting Efforts”
September 24, 2020**

Question:

“As of September 24, the U.S. Agency for Global Media was withholding over nineteen million dollars in funds that Congress appropriated for the Open Technology Fund. As a result, the Open Technology Fund had to stop 49 of its 60 projects in July.

- Why is the U.S. Agency for Global Media withholding funding to the Open Technology Fund when its efforts to help people overcome government censorship in restrictive environments are more important than ever?
- What impacts have these cuts had on activists in these countries who rely on U.S. support to get access to information that is critical of their repressive governments?
- Please provide an update on the status of these suspended projects and a written rationale for your decision to defy the will of Congress.”

Answer:

Mr. Pack did not submit a response in time printing.

Question:

“When you arrived at the U.S. Agency for Global Media, at least sixteen visas for Voice of America journalists were coming up for renewal, and you allowed them to expire. This forced many journalists back to their home countries where their lives might be in danger, as they said in an open letter to the acting Director of Voice of America in August.

- Did you consider the risks these journalists might face if they returned to their home countries when you made your decision not to renew their visas?
- Do you agree that the effectiveness of Voice of America in reaching audiences throughout the world depends on having journalists who bring language skills and global perspectives to their work?
- Please provide a written explanation for why you decided not to renew the visas of each of these journalists.”

Answer:

Mr. Pack did not submit a response in time for printing.

Question:

“Is it your belief that as an official in the Trump Administration, you are above the law and not responsible for providing answers to the American taxpayer who funds your agency’s work?”

Answer:

Mr. Pack did not submit a response in time for printing.

STATEMENT OF KLIGERMAN

House Foreign Affairs Committee

Written Statement for the Record

September 24, 2020 Hearing

**“Oversight of the United States Agency for Global Media and U.S. International
Broadcasting Efforts”**

**by David Kligerman
Former Acting Deputy Director and General Counsel,
United States Agency for Global Media**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, Members of this Committee, in response to a request to do so, I am submitting this written statement for the record to further disclose a number of significant concerns about the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), specifically as they relate to the tenure of our first Presidentially-nominated, Senate-confirmed Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

I welcome this timely hearing, which I hope has helped draw attention to a number of troubling issues that have arisen since Mr. Pack arrived, including the plight of the entirety of our foreign journalist corps, and significant threats to the statutory firewall and the Agency’s editorial independence.

I know that this Committee cares deeply about the success of USAGM and its mission, having worked with your staff, on a bipartisan basis, including with respect to a number of concerns set forth herein. Ultimately, I am deeply concerned that the loss of credibility--absent significant course correction--will lead to a profound erosion of the trust in a brand that the U.S. Government has spent more than three-quarters of a century building and funding. Goodwill may take decades to build, but can be lost in the relative blink of an eye.

I writing in my personal capacity; I am not representing USAGM or any other government agency. I do not wish to duplicate the testimony of my former and current colleagues. I will keep my statement brief and focus on three areas of concern: targeting of career civil servants; evisceration of the Voice of America’s foreign journalist corps; significant risks to the firewall.

Targeting of Career Civil Servants

I am privileged to have spent well over a decade working for or with the federal government, across multiple Presidential administrations, both Republican and Democratic. I have served at USAGM for over seven years as a career civil servant. Prior to USAGM, I served at the U.S. Department of State, including as an attorney in the Office of the Legal Adviser. I served as USAGM’s General Counsel for four years; prior to that, I served as Lead Counsel for the Voice of America and the Assistant General Counsel for Fiscal Law. For eight months preceding Mr. Pack’s arrival, I served as the Acting Deputy CEO.

In mid-August, I was abruptly removed from my position, along with five other career Senior Executives in the Agency front office, on pretextual grounds. The actions against us are unlawful and retaliatory: decapitating the senior career leadership of the agency for political reasons, removing those who would, could, and did sound the alarm.

In various interviews, Mr. Pack has referred to his efforts as being intended to “drain the swamp”. As career civil servants, there should be no loyalty tests to a particular Administration; our loyalty is to the Constitution, the American people, and our Agency and its mission. We are not the swamp or the deep state. As career civil servants, our job is to serve, to the best of our ability, whomever the political leadership may be, regardless of which President or political party is in power. Frankly, it is terribly disappointing to find out that you have a target on your back because you properly executed your duties under previous leadership: in other words, because you did your job.

Furthermore, there should not be retaliation for making protected disclosures. I spoke truth to power and paid the price. Plain and simple. A brave soul who had worked in CEO Pack’s front office revealed to me -- a number of weeks before the events came to pass -- that I was going to be pretextually removed, and that the CEO’s office was directing staff to manufacture dossiers on me in order to force me out.

Sadly, these efforts have likely paid off. My colleagues and I are out of the way. I have been told, and it has been reported, that these brazen actions against us have had a profound chilling effect on the rank and file staff of the agency. After all, if it could happen to the Agency’s most senior career leadership, in such a visible and clearly pretextual way – without repercussion and consequence – then certainly it could happen to them.

Denial of Visas to VOA Journalists

Many, including my current and former colleagues, have spoken eloquently about the profound consequences flowing from the actions of the Agency, under Mr. Pack, to block VOA from submitting the required paperwork to allow their U.S. based, foreign journalists to renew their U.S. visas. Thoughtful observers have concluded that the justification appears to be grounded in a belief by the new Agency leadership that non-citizens are simply less desirable as employees than citizens; and the security concerns, raised as a justification for blocking VOA from submitting the forms, are purely pretextual. I am aware of information that would support such a conclusion.

Some may ask: ‘Why do we need non-citizens for these languages? Don’t we have citizens who speak these languages?’ The Agency does not provide a preference to non-citizens in its hiring. In fact, with respect to hiring non-citizens as civil service hires, the Agency is required to first look only at citizen applicants; it is only if VOA is unable to find a citizen to perform the work, that a non-citizen is considered. Keep in mind that fluency is only the starting point. It is very difficult to find people who are not just fluent, but whose speech is recognizable as native or local to the audiences that VOA seeks to reach, rather than sounding foreign. (As I understand it, even native speakers can lose that type of vernacular fluency after leaving their home countries

for long periods of time.) Even if VOA finds someone who has the type of fluency that they are looking for, that person should also have experience as a journalist. Not just any experience: they need experience in the kind of rigorous journalism that VOA requires. In other words, in many instances VOA is looking for unicorns. Until Mr. Pack and his team arrived, the Agency, like Congress, had a long history of recognizing the importance of this specialized workforce:

The people who work [for U.S. international broadcasting] are highly skilled individuals. They must have journalistic skills. They must be fluent in a number of languages. And they must have an in-depth knowledge of the people, history, and cultures of other nations. Historically, it has not been possible to find a sufficient number of people in the American workforce who have this combination of skills.¹

The harm to the Agency of this loss is profound. As far as I understand nothing seems to be changing: the Agency still refuses to let VOA renew any visa paperwork. In short, it is hard to conclude that this is not gross mismanagement, among other things. These journalists bring mission-critical skills and experience which are ordinarily exceedingly hard to replace. After betraying these people, it is hard to imagine how VOA will be able to recruit new talent in the future.

Perhaps more troubling is the profound personal harm that many of VOA's journalists will face when their visas are not renewed, and they and their families are unceremoniously forced to leave our country which they have so admirably served through their work. This is a profound betrayal of these brave men and women, and of our values. As my colleague Grant Turner said in his remarks to the Committee:

[This] failure to act risks putting the lives of many of those journalists -- and their families -- in danger. Without renewed visas, some will have to return to their home countries -- including countries that, to put it kindly, "pursue" journalists who do not toe the line.

To put a finer point on this, these folks came here and spoke the truth to audiences in their home countries. The truth often included less than flattering portraits of various powerful interests in their home countries, including national and local governments. Now they are simply being handed back to these regimes. For example, a few weeks ago, a colleague told me that blogs operated by State-controlled Chinese media -- who have been following the story of the visas denials as an example of why people cannot trust the US Government -- had been carrying posts calling for reprisals against the "traitorous dogs" who worked for VOA once their visas are let expire by USAGM and they get shipped back to China. Unlike Mr. Pack and his team, who seem content to send these brave men and women back to meet their fate, Congress has long recognized the risk that these brave men and women face in coming to work for the Voice of America, even providing a special immigrant visa category in recognition of the real "possibility of oppression if they are doing our work in their own countries but doing it from here. Broadcasting in their native language will get the message across, provide them with safeguards,

¹ 146 Cong. Rec. E2059-03, 146 Cong. Rec. E2059-03, E2059, 2000 WL 1637282

and will foster the entire purpose of the international broadcasting services of which we are so proud.”²

I urge this committee to look more closely into this issue, including the genesis of these efforts by the current USAGM leadership to target these individuals. To many these actions appear to be based on these reporters’ alienage; in other words, for improper reasons rooted in nativist sentiment by political officials that have no connection to the efficient operation of the organization or the best interests of VOA or its programming.

The Statutory Firewall

I urge this committee to look into Agency compliance with the firewall. The firewall is what guarantees the editorial independence of VOA and the other USAGM funded networks.

Background

The firewall is comprised of various protections set forth in the International Broadcasting Act of 1994 as amended, including section 305(b), 22 USC 6204(b). The corresponding regulation is set forth in 22 C.F.R. § 531, 85 FR 36150, which describes the firewall as follows:

All USAGM-funded Networks must adhere to the highest professional standards of journalism, pursuant to section 303(a)(5) of the IBA, in order to produce news which is consistently reliable and authoritative, accurate, objective, and comprehensive, per section 303(b) of IBA. Accordingly, USAGM networks necessarily enjoy full editorial independence in order to maintain their “professional independence and integrity,” per section 305(b) of the IBA. This statutorily mandated firewall protects the independence of the networks by insulating their editorial decisions from interference from those outside of the network, or from impermissible considerations, as set forth herein.

A statutory ‘firewall,’ provided for in section 305(b) of the IBA, and incident to adherence to the highest professional standards of broadcast journalism, exists around USAGM-funded networks, their products, and staff in order to protect their professional independence and integrity.

Within any credible news organization, a firewall exists between anybody involved with any aspect of journalism (e.g., the creation, editing, reporting, distributing, etc., of content) and everyone else in the organization. For purposes of USAGM, firewalls exist between the newsroom of a USAGM-network; everyone else in the organization; and the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government, as described herein.

² 146 Cong. Rec. H11699-01, 146 Cong. Rec. H11699-01, H11700, 2000 WL 1629721

The firewall is critical to ensuring that the editors, reporters, and other journalists of the USAGM network make the decisions on what stories to cover and how they are covered, and that those decisions are ultimately governed by the highest standards of professional journalism.³

The firewall is essential to the credibility of VOA and all of the USAGM funded networks. It is essential to ensuring that VOA and the other networks remain independent, and do not become mouthpieces of a particular administration. In other words, it insulates the networks from political interference. This is critical. We do not have a state broadcaster, and VOA should not be allowed to become one.

Previously, a bipartisan board provided a critical extra layer of protection. Vesting the hiring and removal of network heads in a bipartisan group insulated the network heads from political interference. They needed not fear repercussions from publishing a story that was considered politically unfavorable to a current administration. Now that authority is vested in a presidentially-appointed, senate confirmed CEO, answerable to the Whitehouse. Without a Board as a sort of physical embodiment of the firewall, rigorous self-enforcement by the Agency becomes critical, as does congressional oversight. Among other things, the firewall can be violated when the CEO or his staff takes actions which violate 22 C.F.R. § 531(c):

This "firewall" is understood to be violated when any person within the Executive Branch or a Network, but outside the newsroom, attempts to direct, pressure, coerce, threaten, interfere with, or otherwise impermissibly influence any of the USAGM networks, including their leadership, officers, employees, or staff, in the performance of their journalistic and broadcasting duties and activities. It is also violated when someone inside the newsroom acts in furtherance of or pursuant to such impermissible influence. Such impermissible influence would undermine the journalistic and editorial independence, and thus the credibility, of that USAGM network, and their reporters, editors, or other journalists.

Best Practices Review

News organizations are regularly called upon to assess content that they have previously published. It is common for readers, audience members, or others to ask for a retraction or correction; or point out that a particular story fails to comport with any number of precepts of professional journalism and/or an organization's best practices. Sometimes the alleged errors are minor; in other cases they may be more significant. In a credible news organization that adheres to the highest standards of professional journalism, investigations involving editorial decisions are the purview of the "newsroom" (as opposed to the business/corporate side of the organization). In other words, such investigations are to be called for and ultimately carried out by and/or *on behalf of* VOA. After such a review, VOA would propose disciplinary actions, if any, with respect to the story and those responsible for it.

³ 22 C.F.R §§531.1(a); .3 (a)-(b), (d)

At VOA, like other reputable news organizations, such investigations are generally initially carried out by the VOA Standards Editor. Unfortunately, the Standards Editor was removed by Mr. Pack on the first day; he was not, the last I heard, returned to his duties or replaced.

Absent such protections, one could imagine a scenario whereby the political leadership of USAGM, who answer directly to the President or the Whitehouse, decide to investigate a VOA story which is deemed detrimental to the President. Perhaps, for example, the story could be perceived as harmful to the then-current U.S. President's re-election efforts, including by saying positive things about his or her opponent. In such a scenario, even if there are legitimate concerns about the story, one can see why it would be profoundly problematic for the political leadership of USAGM to carry out the investigation. At a minimum they would seem to be an interested party, such that their carrying out of the investigation would undermine the very credibility of the organization, and its editorial independence, and raise questions about political influence. This is in addition to the more general issue that investigations involving editorial decisions should be carried out on behalf of and ultimately be adjudicated by those on the news-side of the organization.

Disclosures of Wrongdoing

I have exercised my rights as a federal whistleblower to disclose the above and other acts of wrongdoing to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the Department of State and USAGM, as well as to the Congress.

Conclusion

There is a climate of fear and intimidation at the Agency, based on what I have witnessed or heard. VOA journalists are courageous and professional, but they are also human. I am hopeful that this Committee's strong oversight can help further shine light on the goings on, and help buttress the agency during these trying times.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR THE RECORD FROM MS.
BENNETT



VOA TRANSFORMATION

CONTENTS

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Executive Summary

The Voice of America in April, 2016 was at a crossroads. With more than 1600 journalists worldwide broadcasting in more than 40 languages, most VOA staffers were talented, hard-working and committed to their mission: to bring objective, truthful news and information to audiences in countries around the world without a free press. But there was widespread confusion about how best to achieve that goal.

Organizationally, VOA was falling further and further behind. While many on VOA's staff realized that the agency needed to change with the times, decades of bureaucratic infighting and inefficiencies both inside and outside the organization had taken their toll.

Rather than supporting the mission, USAGM (then called BBG) systems were frequently impeding VOA performance. Discipline and accountability were lax. Even major infractions – like threatening co-workers, sleeping on the job, plagiarism, viewing pornography and going AWOL for months – or even years – went unpunished. Many job descriptions were decades old. Many employees felt dead-ended.

Opaque financial reporting made effective budgeting and planning difficult - so VOA regularly forfeited millions of dollars of year-end funding. It was nearly impossible to track in a timely way spending on hiring – which makes up more than three quarters of VOA's budget.

Meanwhile such inattention to funding had left the technical structure teetering. Inadequate Wi-fi forced journalists to file news stories from a nearby Starbucks. Cameras, computers, phones and other equipment hadn't been replaced in years. The archaic content management system couldn't respond quickly to fast-breaking news. The Agency hadn't invested in digital audience growth or High Definition television technology, meaning that VOA audiences even in developing countries were at risk.

VOA's siloed 1950s structure meant its then-45 newsrooms couldn't share each others' work, resulting in wasteful duplication. News reports were often so late that they went unused. Systems and procedures to insure editing VOA-wide standards and accountability were sometimes far below professional standards. Opinion had crept into news stories which were sometimes unbalanced and biased.

All this risked dooming the 75-year-old institution to irrelevance at a time when hostile governments in China, Iran and Russia were beefing up their own operations. VOA needed to be made competitive in the current and future media landscape by creating a modern structure, technical infrastructure and management culture that could support this objective.

Critics among VOA external stakeholders including in Congress were calling for drastic change. Among staffers, the prevailing view was that while change was essential and long overdue, meaningful change inside the Federal government was impossible. It wasn't true.

VOA transformed itself by attacking weaknesses while building on strengths. We started with the organization's existing journalistic passion, talent and determination. Outsiders with a private sector outlook and long experience in journalism joined together with skilled, hard-working, motivated and creative long-time VOA insiders. These insiders untangled regulatory thickets and shouldered the bulk of the painstaking work of change. Supportive and transparent Agency leadership and a bipartisan and collegial board were crucial. Most critical, however, was the pride in VOA's independence and the strength of its free press mission. The goal of removing obstacles to that mission motivated everyone and sustained us through the inevitable dark days when we felt it couldn't be done.

Here is what VOA was able to achieve in just four years.

Mission

MISSION THEN: VOA was unfocused and frustrated. VOA journalists were justifiably proud of their strong, award-winning journalism, objective U.S. government and political coverage, journalistic independence, investigative projects and documentaries. Still, criticism from outside VOA was taking its toll. Staff publicly and privately expressed confusion over the Agency's mission. Insiders and outsiders both questioned the relevance of the mission.

MISSION NOW: VOA refocused on its core Charter mission: Bringing objective news and information to those without a free press; Telling America's story; explaining America's government and policies to the world; Representing all of the U.S. and not just one portion of the U.S.

TELLING AMERICA'S STORY THEN: American stories were referred to as "Americana" and considered less important side activities. Lack of budget priority meant American perspectives were largely confined to local travel in the greater Washington, D.C. area, limiting the diversity of perspectives.

TELLING AMERICA'S STORY NOW: Budget reallocated to create a Silicon Valley bureau and to cover outside-the-Beltway issues such as: Russian ([Small Town America](#), [What on Earth?](#), [America- The Big Road Trip](#), [America 101](#), [How it's done in America?](#), [Lexicon](#) and [Our American Story](#)), Ukrainian ([View from Washington](#)), Serbian ([From America](#)), Georgian ([Ambassadors of the American experience](#)); New programs on American life in Afghan service, in Bangla, Urdu and Persian Services. In VOA Persian, "The Achievers" hosted by Max Amini, an Iranian American Comedian, highlights Iranian-Americans including Firouz Naderi (NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory), Alex Mehr (CEO and Founder of Mentorbox), Shar Poordanesh (Washington Redskins), Barry Navidi (CEO Barry Navidi Productions) and Jimmy Delshad (Former Mayor of Beverly Hills). In VOA Mandarin American policy and American life are widely followed: Senator Rubio on China's coronavirus response got over 200,000 Twitter views. A story of a Virginian man using 3D printing to produce personal protective equipment got over 250,000. Created VOA Connect, a flagship digital program telling America's story. Launched "Plugged In," a weekly news magazine program featuring anchor Greta VanSusteren

REPRESENTING U.S. TO THE WORLD THEN: Lack of budget and technical capability meant VOA depended heavily on local interviews with government officials and think tank experts to interpret policy.

REPRESENTING U.S. TO THE WORLD NOW: VOA technical staff and translation team perfected ability to live-stream events and to simultaneously translate them. The President's Inauguration Address; State of the Union Addresses; Democratic Presidential debates; the Impeachment hearings; President Trump's daily COVID-19 Task force briefings; Congressional debates and hearings and other key political speeches are all carried live and simultaneously translated in as many as two dozen languages.

OBJECTIVE, CREDIBLE NEWS AND INFORMATION THEN: While this VOA mission was always in force, and fact-checking always a priority, it needed substantial improvement through training and reallocation of resources.

OBJECTIVE, CREDIBLE NEWS AND INFORMATION NOW: The addition of resources and training, including the creation of Polygraph.info, a fact-checking operation, refocused VOA on exposing disinformation. Intensive training and leadership focus stressed neutral language and factual presentations of issues and minimization of bias – VOA-wide.

PROGRAMMING

PROGRAMMING THEN (MAJOR MARKETS) – VOA in 2016 was facing vastly expanded competition from state-controlled media in Russia, China and Iran. With budgetary help from Congress, VOA, in cooperation with its RFE/RL partners, had begun expanding existing programming initiatives aimed at Russian speakers.

PROGRAMMING NOW (MAJOR MARKETS)

Current Time (2017) – Expanded the Russian-language news, information and magazine-style entertainment channel aimed at Russian speakers around the world that had been launched by previous leadership into a 24/7 network. VOA's contribution, Current Time America, is a one-hour, live television newscast (Monday-Friday) that provides U.S. news and analysis, live political and policy reporting from Washington and New York, comprehensive coverage of presidential and congressional affairs, interviews with American newsmakers, reports on health, science and technology, and entertainment news. A network of reporters across the United States provides news and feature reports from major American cities. The show is streamed on the Current Times network.

VOA 365 (2018) – a Persian-language 24/7 satellite television channel, satellite service, expanding the critical global and U.S. news relating to Iran and providing the granular, audience-focused information about U.S. policy toward Iran and the region. Under the brand name of VOA 365, VOA Persian every year aired more than 50 live major addresses, statements, speeches, and press conferences by key American figures in real time with simultaneous translation in the Persian language, as well as Congressional hearings on Iran. The channel also features entertainment shows, such as a popular automobile show, travelogues and documentaries.

PLUS ONE (2020) – a new Digital News Network to be launched alongside a similar program by RFA. This Mandarin network will shift programming from traditional radio and satellite broadcasts toward digital and social media content for Mandarin speakers worldwide, including the extensive Chinese diaspora overseas and the growing population of Chinese citizens travelling globally for business, leisure, and education. It's fast-paced content, focusing on personal, professional and global topics, will be visually appealing and story-heavy, aimed at a younger, digital-savvy audience.

OTHER PROGRAMMING THEN: In early 2016, VOA programming was siloed in individual language services. There was little or no themed programming. There was little organized simultaneous translation capability.

OTHER PROGRAMMING NOW: VOA broke down silos to enable all of VOA to collaborate on programming and for each of the 47 language services to use each others' content. The de-siloing also permitted for the first time programming on major themes of interest to all languages.

SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION: Has become a standard feature of programming of major events such as political conventions, Inaugurations, major hearings, State of the Union speeches. These are either done on an individual or regional basis depending on the scope of the event or translated into as many as two dozen languages at a time.

REFUGEE CAMPAIGN: the agency focused on the more than 70 million around the world who are displaced, migrants, or refugees. VOA commissioned special news coverage and programming to focus on their situation, assigning teams of journalists to cover border and immigration issues in the U.S. and abroad. The agency's documentary on the plight of the Rohingya who fled Myanmar for Bangladesh, Displaced, won several national awards. VOA initiated the first-ever Rohingya language news program, a daily half-hour show broadcast into the camps on the border between Bangladesh and Myanmar.

50/50 CAMPAIGN: the agency adopted a BBC initiative to increase the number of women's voices on our air, used as sources, and in our programming leadership. The number of women in positions of responsibility at the agency greatly increased, as did the production of specialty "women's shows," such as Our Voices. The amount of female experts on various topics used as sources for VOA program content went up, though still short of the 50/50 mix between men and women that was the goal.

FREE PRESS MATTERS: mirroring an internal effort to raise VOA's already acute awareness of journalism standards and "best practices," the agency created a Free Press beat, hired a specialist journalist and adopted a tagline used across its 47 languages: A Free Press Matters. The campaign was

designed to be a rallying point for its international audiences living in environments where freedom of expression is limited. The Free Press focus summarizes VOA's purpose in much of the world.

POLYGRAPH.INFO: building off VOA's mission, the fact-checking site was created early on. It first focused on Russian disinformation that targeted the Russian-speaking audience of the former Soviet Union. In 2019, it expanded to fact check misinformation and disinformation around the world, especially focusing on Chinese dis- and mis-information.

"ENGLISH EVERYWHERE": realizing that the consumption of English language content is not "one size fits all," and building on the success of VOA's English to Africa language service, VOA spread English language resources out to VOA's regional language divisions. Doing so allowed the production of content in English focused on the needs and interests of English-hungry audiences in territories such as Asia, where the English to Asia service received wide play. In VOA's News Center, specialized "beat" content produced in English for VOA's language services was refocused to respond to global audience needs.

"SHOWCASE STRATEGY": VOA programming produced "showcase" documentaries and digital efforts designed to represent its major commitments on the festival and award circuit, amplifying VOA's unique programming focus to groups that might not otherwise be exposed and building word of mouth within the organization about the importance of quality. "Boko Haram: Journey From Evil", "Hell and Hope", "Displaced," and "The Worth of a Girl" won national awards or other international recognition.

AUDIENCE THEN -- Television audiences around the world had expanded greatly under previous leadership through the addition of local television affiliate partnerships. Digital audience still lagged.

AUDIENCE NOW -- VOA total worldwide audience -- radio, tv and digital -- grew by nearly 19% between 2016 and 2019 to 280.9 million viewers, listeners or readers. Tellingly, however, that increase includes VOA's digital audience, which during the same period grew by 153% to 87.1 million audience.

VOA PROGRAMMING

VOA quickly launched or expanded programs to focus on places around the globe where free press was increasingly threatened -- such as China, Iran, Russia and Venezuela. VOA encouraged innovation to update outmoded programming and support new development. Many program initiatives were done without any new funding.

Venezuela 360

This 30-minute weekly multimedia current affairs program show delves into topics including the U.S. policy towards the region, the deepening humanitarian and social crises, the exodus of Venezuelan refugees to other countries in the region and options for country's future.



Plugged In with Greta Van Susteren
A weekly half-hour news show that takes its audience on a fascinating, birds-eye view of American policy and its larger impact on the world.

The Worth of a Girl

VOA reporters around the world focused on the worth of a girl to reveal how a young bride is valued by two families: the one she leaves behind and the one she joins.



Hell and Hope

A poignant one-hour documentary about surviving Yazidi girls who were kidnapped, raped, tortured and sold through human trafficking amongst the cadres and friends of IS militants.





Displaced
A one-hour documentary from inside the Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh with Greta Van Susteren.



Learning English Refugee Training
Learning English has partnered with the UNHCR to train English teachers at refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.



Our Voices

A 30-minute weekly roundtable discussion program with a Pan-African cast of women focused on issues of vital importance to our African audience.



Le Monde Aujourd'hui

A daily, 30-minute magazine show for Francophone Africa that takes a fresh look at news across Africa and around the globe.



Duniani Leo

A daily, 30-minute magazine show in Swahili that reports on the most important stories of the day in the target region, U.S. and the world.



Vous et Nous

A 30-minute weekly magazine for Francophone Africa that offers an unprecedented Africa/America connection.

**VOA STUDIOS
DEVELOPMENT
FROM 2016
TO TODAY**

VOA embarked on revitalizing the core TV and radio studios that provide the backdrop and branding for the majority of VOA's live programming. This modernization included updates to lighting, staging, and set design transforming studios from dark outdated venues to bright, state-of-the-art contemporary ones utilizing an all-new steel and glass look enhanced with LED lighting.



Studio 47 before



Studio 47 after



Studio 50 before



Studio 50 after



Studio 50 after



Studio 18 before



Studio 18 after

TV Master Control



Efficiency

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY THEN: VOA overall retained an outmoded 1950s hub-and-spoke organization centered on an English-language newsroom with "satellite" newsrooms in other languages. All 47 languages were siloed with little communication, causing costly coverage duplication. Ad hoc chain of command, reporting structures, deadlines, assigning and editing meant content disconnect from market needs meaning as much as a third of 100-person main newsroom content went unused by global audiences. Work accountability was difficult to establish, making VOA-wide standards difficult to enforce.

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY NOW: "Bridge Editor" function created to break down silos. Extensive restructuring stressed collaboration. A new Planning Editor function centralized daily and long-term plans for all of VOA. VOA's television, radio and digital audiences began to drive content creation resulting in widespread sharing and collaboration. No major coverage or initiative is approved without the assurance of audience need. A "customer service" approach in the News Center now ensures timely distribution 24/7. Staff schedules shifted to support this effort, especially at night and during the weekends. All news coverage centrally coordinated and shared across languages. VOA's newly created Digital Special Assistant established a content-sharing system so language services can easily find digital content, which resulted in more original VOA content being used across VOA. Some original content from language services that did well for News Center + shared with other services: Afghan Family Struggles With Drug Addiction (497K views) - Video : Afghan Service; Kurdish Street Food (25K views) - Video: Kurdish Service; Al-Shabab Attacks Airbase Used by US Military (20K views) - Video: Somali Service; Kashmir Snowfall 29K views - Video: VOA's Urdu Service

COLLABORATION AND CONTENT SHARING THEN: Joint projects with multiple language services were rare. Collaboration among USAGM entities (RFE/RL, RFA, OCB, MBN) almost nonexistent, resulting in missed opportunities and wasteful duplication. Outside collaboration was largely limited to government entities such as USAID.

COLLABORATION AND CONTENT SHARING NOW: INTERNAL COLLABORATION: Renegotiation of wire service and visual content contracts established consistency among all five entities and removed legal barriers to content sharing. VOA now leads weekly content-sharing meetings with all USAGM entities and led major joint projects including one on China's global reach and one on press freedom around the world. EXTERNAL COLLABORATION: A new Partnership Director drove collaboration with external entities such as: UNHCR (Learning English program in Rohingya refugee camp); American University in Kabul (training Afghan English teachers); BBC (50/50: On going project to women in programming); Sesame Works (content sharing agreement); CARE (Distribution of VOA "Worth of a Girl: series internationally); Chatham House (Screening of VOA documentaries and joint refugee Town Hall meetings.) Partnered with fellow international media organizations -- With Deutsche Welle, BBC, and France Medias Monde to launch a youth-focused YouTube channel, "+90," providing alternatives to censorship in Turkey.

Financial Stewardship

FINANCIAL/BUDGETING EFFICIENCY THEN: Opaque financial reporting. No easy means of tracking hiring -- 75% of all Agency spending. Hiring backlogs stood at over one year, with critical functions filled by costly contractors. No prioritizing of hires, meaning little progress in upgrading staff skills.

FINANCIAL/BUDGETING EFFICIENCY NOW: New financial dashboard mirrors those used in private industry, resulting in ability to track and prioritize spending. Siloed financial structures-- VOA managers, resource support staff, HR, Contracts, Finance departments -- all brought together. Monthly meetings across resource staffs ensures every penny spent has a purpose. Hiring dashboard now means VOA can prioritize and track every vacant position; hiring time cut by as much as 60%. Tight budget control means all resources now directed to priority projects

EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES THEN: New projects and programming were only occasionally started without new Congressional funding. Requests were closely tied to a Federal budget cycle meaning that new programming often took two years or more to implement and global opportunities were lost. While new projects were added, outmoded projects were retained, an inefficient use of resources.

EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES NOW: Innovation was encouraged with outmoded, low-audience programming and low-productivity staff repurposed to create new programming. Financial discipline enabled VOA over four years to produce as much as \$30 million in spending on new programming from existing budgets, without new budget requests. The reallocated funds were used to improve its return on the taxpayers' investment and for new initiatives to grow VOA's impact, including:

- Polygraph.info -- Created disinformation fact-checker
- VOA Connect -- A fast-paced digital news program aimed at younger viewers
- Our Voices -- A woman-hosted news and information program targeting African women across the continent.
- Rohingya Broadcasting -- The only Rohingya-language news and information show, broadcast daily into refugee camps in Bangladesh.
- Plugged In: With Greta VanSusteren -- Weekly news magazine show featuring former MSNBC/FOX/CNN host
- Launched Newsletters
 - Created English language newsletter
 - Extremism watch newsletter
- Created Investigative Unit -- creating award-winning coverage including of Extremism and Dis-and Mis-information
- Press Freedom Coverage -- focusing on Press Freedom around the world. Also, mirroring an internal effort to raise VOA's already keen awareness of journalism standards and "best practices," VOA adopted a tagline used across its 47 languages: "A Free Press Matters," which broadly summarizes much of VOA's purpose in its target regions.

Technology

TECHNOLOGY THEN: VOA's digital operation was years behind the private sector. The system controlling website operations was slow-moving, out-of-date and poorly designed. It sometimes took up to two hours to redo the homepage and months to get new page designs - rather than hours or at most days. Many processes that were automated in other newsrooms were done manually in VOA, requiring hundreds of additional hours a week of work. WIFI was so bad – particularly in the broadcast studios – that people often turned to nearby Starbucks Internet, making it impossible to respond quickly to news. Mobile app design was 10 years out of date and often had broken feeds. There was no refresh policy for laptops, iPads and mobile phones meaning they were antiquated and subject to crashes. Modern equipment like portable WIFI or drones were non-existent. As a result VOA's could not improve its social media presence. Television and radio studios hadn't been refurbished since the 1990s, resulting in an aging look.

TECHNOLOGY NOW: Over 4 years VOA has:

- Developed a new content management system that enables homepage changes in 3 to 5 minutes vs. 1 to 2 hours before. The new system cuts in half the time to access photos, with massive savings in staff time and enables more modern digital design for audience engagement.
- Developed an Artificial Intelligence program to provide transcriptions and translations in minutes instead of the hours or days of staff time required previously, enabling real-time use of interviews across language services.
- Developed a new workflow product to give VOA-wide transparency into all planning and assignments enabling unprecedented collaboration.
- Launched 19 new mobile apps in 21 languages, including Mandarin, Farsi, Russian, Korean, Urdu, Spanish, Vietnamese, Afghan (Dari, Pashto), the Horn of Africa (Amharic, Afaan Oromo, Tigrigna), English, Tibetan, French, Turkish, Hausa, Khmer, Creole, Somali, and Burmese. These individual apps enabled larger language services to manage the content to reflect local news consumer habits.
- Launched Amazon Echo VOA products in Deewa, English, Azerbaijani, Spanish, Mandarin, French, Persian, Tibetan, and Somali on their Amazon Echo or any device (including the car).
- Set aggressive social media targets, requiring each language service to become one of the top social media accounts in their regions. Provided metrics, training, equipment and aggressive goals.
- Launched forward-looking plans for drones, immersive video and OTT transmission for strategic positioning for the future.
- Revitalized TV studios for such programs as VOA365 to Iran; Venezuela 360 and the "Our Voices" program aimed at African women from dark outdated design to a bright, sleek modern look. Two other TV studio renovations are in progress.
- Renovated and updated Radio on TV Studio 2 and 18
- Completed the 4-year transition to HD television technology, the previous lack of funding for which threatened gains in television markets achieved under previous leadership.
- Added capacity to bring in field video to 12 inputs from 4, which has been critical to COVID-19 response.
- Began a program for studio automation that will extend the production day without adding new staff.

DIGITAL AUDIENCE GROWTH

DIGITAL THEN: TV growth was a strong and necessary existing priority. However, digital audience growth was not yet prioritized. Most language services viewed digital as simply posting their TV shows to social media and the website. Many language services did not have dedicated social media staff -- VOA's news infrastructure was strongly oriented towards television and radio exclusively. Few people understood digital metrics. The underpinnings of success on digital platforms--talent, workflow, culture, leadership, technology, storytelling were behind the times, causing the agency to fall behind in the digital space.

DIGITAL NOW: Changing the operational and strategic orientation of VOA required major changes across the agency. Everything from Contracts to HR was overhauled, leading to a more nimble and digital audience-focused operation.

HR: Job descriptions are at the heart of rewarding talented employees and correcting underperformers. VOA changed staffers' digital performance metrics, changed job descriptions, created new hiring processes and ramped up digital and social media training.

-- Contracting: Federal contracting is laborious and often forces the purchase of products and services that are not the best in their category. VOA worked with the Office of Contracts to renegotiate old contractors, sought new vendors; and created new, speedier purchasing processes to enable VOA to keep up with its digital competitors.

-- Budgeting: The agency shifted financial priorities to prioritize digital tools -- including software, cameras, up-to-date cell phones, remote and local transmission capabilities. Funding was also shifted to fund a modern content management system.

-- Leadership: There was top-down support for a new leadership structure prioritizing digital and video expert managers; cross-agency leads were designated for social media and for visual content.

-- Recruiting: Hiring was prioritized away from text-only, television-only or radio-only skills and towards those with both technical and storytelling digital skills

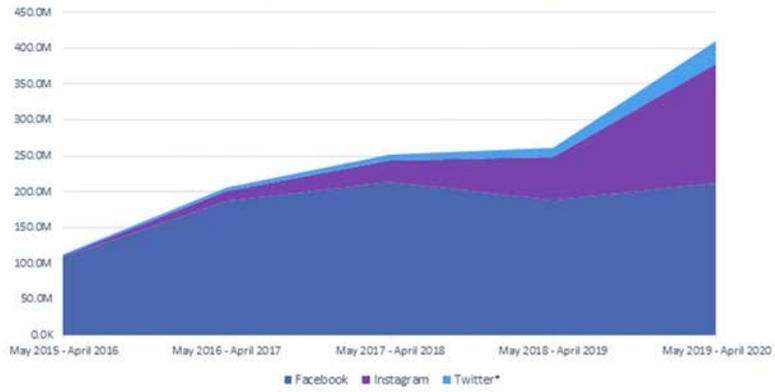
-- Workflows were redesigned to support faster turnaround, cross-platform creation and use of news content.

-- Content creation: Visual journalism was emphasized and new art forms embraced (visual explainers; short video stories; Twitter-chain narratives). In particular, video with character-driven short narratives were emphasized.

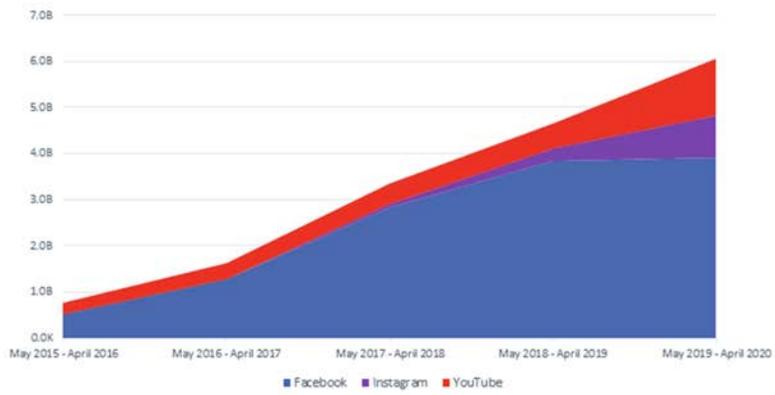
-- Metrics -- The work of VOA's Digital Strategy and Audience team was prioritized to emphasize the use of data in decision-making and in performance evaluations.

The results were dramatic, particularly on social platforms.

VOA Engagement Actions Across Platforms

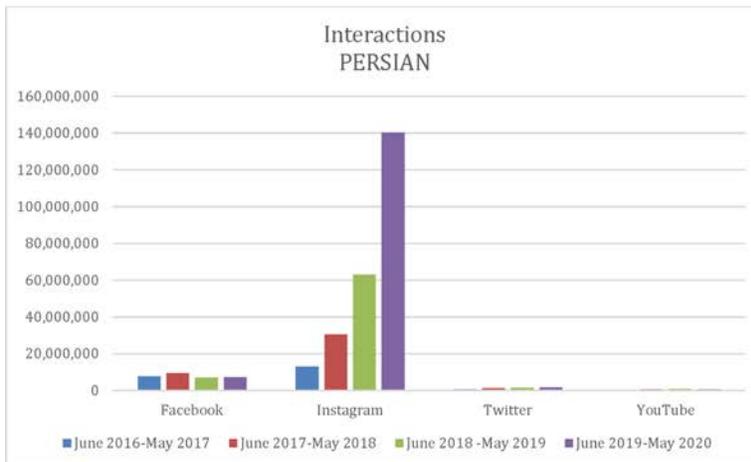
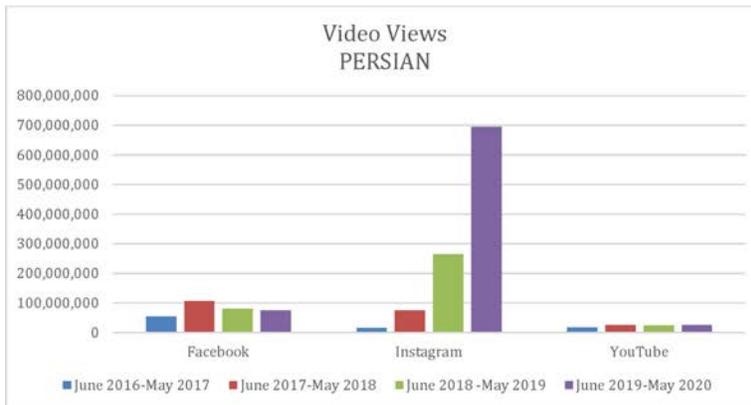


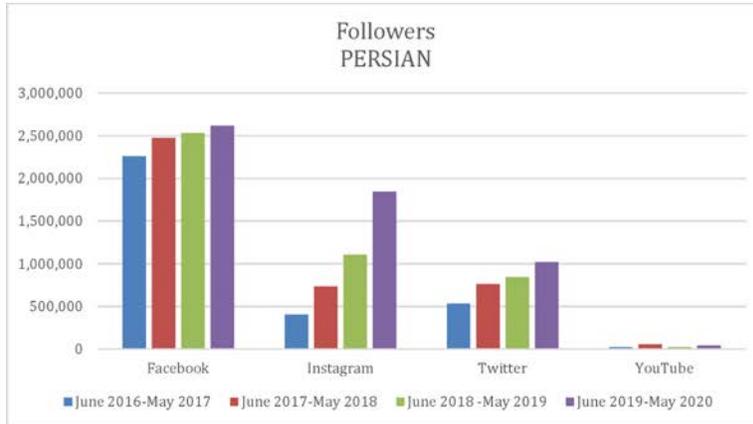
VOA Video Views Across Platforms

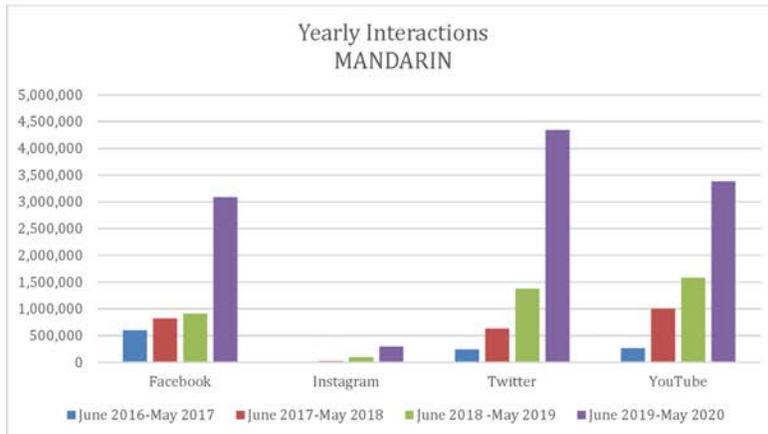
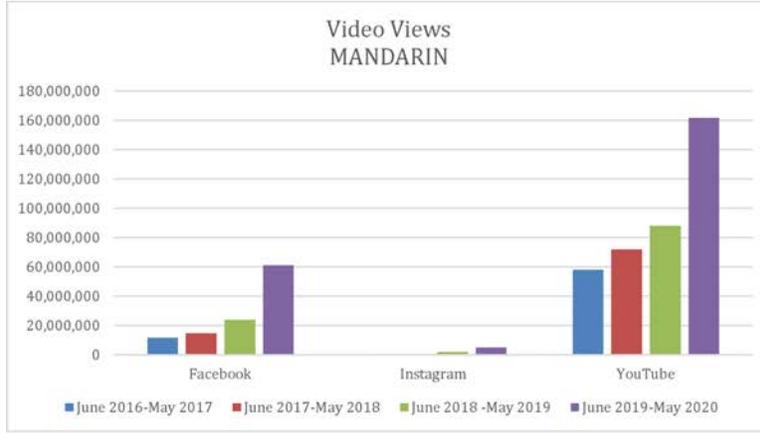


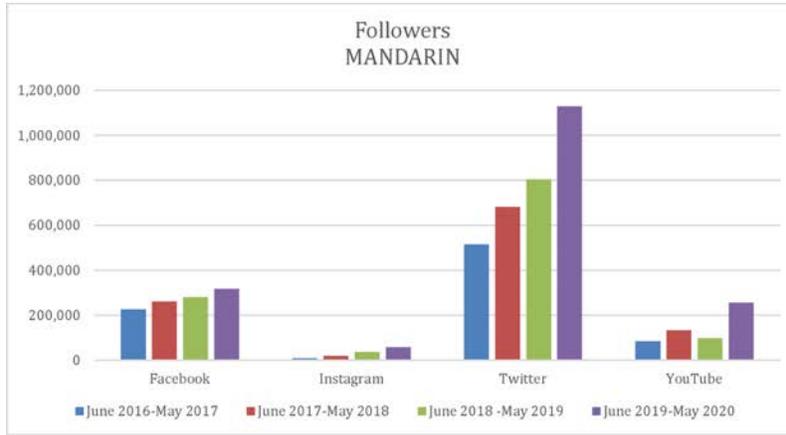
That trend carries through with some of VOA's most strategically important languages, particularly Mandarin and Persian. One of the keys to VOA's digital success is its ability to tailor its work to the unique situation in each market. Persian has seen explosive growth on Instagram, while YouTube is largely irrelevant there. The opposite is true in Mandarin, where YouTube delivers the bulk of our social audiences and Twitter keeps growing in engagement, while Instagram is just starting to catch on.

In every case the trend is clear: VOA delivers enormous value to the American taxpayer with limited budgets, growing audiences in some of the most challenging markets in the world.









Accountability

PERFORMANCE THEN: Accountability was low, which caused frustration among good performers. Over the previous five years on a pass-fail system we could not identify anyone who had received failing ratings. Good performance was not effectively recognized and poor performance was not effectively corrected.

PERFORMANCE NOW: USAGM/VOA replaced the pass/fail system with a five-tier system, and provided a budget for performance-based awards as well as for excellent accomplishments. All employees and supervisors received training. VOA helped create a performance management operation in USAGM by donating a position. The Office of Inspector General noted in April 2019 that VOA had raised the number of reviewed employees to 100% from 70% the previous year. Employees were rated on a strict bell curve, with the bulk of employees receiving "fully successful" and only exceptional performance rating an "outstanding". Of employees rated below Fully Successful in 2018-2019, eight percent improved their performance during the next rating cycle. Dozens more, faced with honest performance reviews for the first time, chose to either retire or leave the agency.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS THEN: Job descriptions had not been fully updated, sometimes for decades, meaning that modern expectations, especially for digital performance, were not reflected. The lack of current job descriptions meant that high-performing employees had no guidance as to expectations while underperforming employees could not be held accountable.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS NOW: A thorough review and VOA-wide establishment of modern job requirements, including aggressive targets for digital and social media performance, resulted in clearer expectations, higher performance, and facilitated VOA's pivot to a more competitive news operation.

DISCIPLINE THEN: In May, 2016, several people had been removed from their positions, awaiting discipline outside the building (at full pay), at least one for over a year. Serious infractions including threats of violence against colleagues or walking off the job had been met with reprimands or silence. There was a widespread belief that harassment, including sexual harassment, was tolerated since complaints were not fully followed up. Few people were removed for cause.

DISCIPLINE NOW: Serious infractions are dealt with quickly and -- within the limitations of government privacy rules -- transparently with the help of USAGM General Counsel and HR professionals. Serious infractions, many of which had previously been tolerated, resulted in employee terminations. These included: Using government computers to run personal business; downloading thousands of pornographic images onto government computers; accepting money from foreign government officials; failure to report to work for extended periods of time; threatening or physically assaulting co-workers; failure to follow orders; plagiarism and other serious violations of journalistic best practices. VOA leadership announced a zero tolerance harassment policy and encouraged re-reporting of all harassment cases regardless of when they had occurred. Nearly three dozen people reported unresolved harassment issues, including sexual harassment. These cases were re-examined, dealt with appropriately and -- within permissible privacy rules -- those bringing the case were informed of the disposition of the complaint. (In most cases the problem had been mainly that the complainant had never been informed that their complaints had been investigated). Prevention of Sexual Harassment training has been made mandatory for all employees and contractors.

ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY THEN: There was no training on the responsibilities regarding VOA's editorial firewall or of the requirements of Smith Mundt regulations governing domestic transmission of news. There was no outlet to receive comments or complaints about stories or news reports, resulting in a hodge-podge of responses across the agency. In common with other news organizations, the issue of staff personal social media behavior was a serious problem and no clear policies had been articulated.

ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY NOW: Mandatory training and refresher training was created on firewall responsibilities and Smith-Mundt requirements. The Best Practices guide was updated to reflect industry standards in personal social media behavior. Agency-wide training by VOA's Standards Editor on best practices, copyright laws, and ethical standards was vastly increased. Training in bias in journalism was made mandatory as was training in sexual harassment prevention. Senior leadership made frequent written, verbal and personal statements as to the integrity expected of every VOA employee -- including personal visits to every Division to stress that accepting anything of value in relation to news coverage in any way was unacceptable and would be dealt with strictly no matter where in the world it occurred. Best Practices and ethical standards training began to be expanded to VOA's in-country stringers but had to be postponed after the first session due to Coronavirus.

ADDRESSING POLARIZED DIASPORA GROUPS THEN-- Highly politicized diaspora groups all over the world often loudly criticized VOA coverage, each from its own political perspective. These complaints came from all over the world, for example: from the highly-polarized Iranian community; the Ethiopian Oromo-Amharic conflicts; and from various ethnic groups in the Pakistan-Afghanistan areas. This led to frequent internal conflict and destabilizing management changes within VOA.

ADDRESSING POLARIZED DIASPORA GROUPS NOW -- This is an ongoing process based on several principles: Taking the complaints seriously and investigating each one; supporting lower level management while establishing rigorous reporting and writing standards; launching more frequent reviews, including, for example, both internal program reviews and hiring expert analysts to review Iranian coverage; increased translation and English-language distribution of Mandarin coverage for increased transparency; establishment of very rigorous social media policies, including for personal social media accounts and zero tolerance for personal, partisan postings from VOA staff, even from personal accounts.

EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE, OBJECTIVITY AND FIREWALL THEN -- VOA has long recognized its editorial independence and its trustworthiness as an unbiased news source is key to the high trust its audiences have. Little outside validation existed for this, however.

EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE, OBJECTIVITY AND FIREWALL NOW -- VOA made training in the rights and responsibilities under statutory Firewall independence mandatory for all. Facebook, after a rigorous examination of policies, practices and standards, and noting VOA's editorial independence, excluded VOA from the label as a state-controlled media outlet. Media Bias/Fact Check, which rates global media on bias, rated VOA "least biased" based on balanced story selection and use of neutral language. MBFC also rated VOA high for factual reporting noting proper sourcing and a clean fact-check record.

Equity and Employee Engagement

CONTRACTING WORKFORCE THEN : One third of the VOA workforce was hired through contracting firms. VOA had no transparency into overhead costs or actual employee salaries. Big differences in pay between people doing identical jobs and between people covering different geographical areas caused pervasive morale problems. Non-transparent overhead increased expenses for the agency. Inability to properly manage and incentivize workforce since VOA was not actually the employer.

CONTRACTING WORKFORCE NOW: Beginning in FY 2019, VOA sought Congressional authorization to transfer these individuals from employment with contracting firms to direct employment by the agency as Personal Services Contractors (PSCs), thus resolving years of inequalities. The funding that previously went to contracting overhead is now used for additional pay is now used to pay fair market rates, performance bonuses, paid time off and sick leave. The VOA PSC program was built from the ground up, with policy and practice unique across the entire U.S. Government. VOA has successfully transitioned approximately 500 individuals to Personal Services Contracts to date, with plans to complete transitioning our Studio and Production Operations and News Center contractors by the end of this fiscal year. Both USAGM Corporate and Office of Cuba Broadcasting plan to use the framework and processes VOA has created to begin using PSC authority for their own contracting needs.

PAY AND BENEFIT EQUITY THEN: Federal GS classifications had not been reviewed in years and in many cases, in decades. People sitting next to each other doing identical jobs had different GS levels making very visible – and sometimes clearly geography- and ethnicity-based – inequities.

PAY AND BENEFIT EQUITY NOW: USAGM HR was not funded to conduct such GS reviews so VOA redirected its own resources to fund USAGM bench reviews of all VOA GS positions to determine appropriate classifications. Pay and benefit inequities at lower levels – which were sometimes geography or ethnicity specific – were rectified (this process is ongoing) Managers in some language services were found to be classified at a lower level than those working in English; a VOA-wide review corrected those inequities. These painstaking audits continue today with the goal of 100% GS-level review.

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION THEN: A widely-voiced complaint was that there was little communication between senior leadership and rank-and-file.

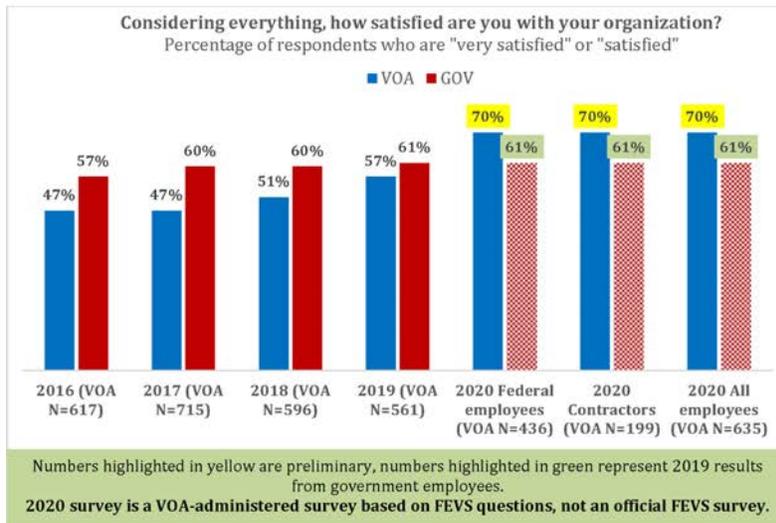
EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION NOW: VOA senior leadership launched regular staff notes on journalistic ethics, performance requirements, expectations for employee behavior (emphasizing zero tolerance for sexual or any harassment). A formal program of employee engagement was launched that included:

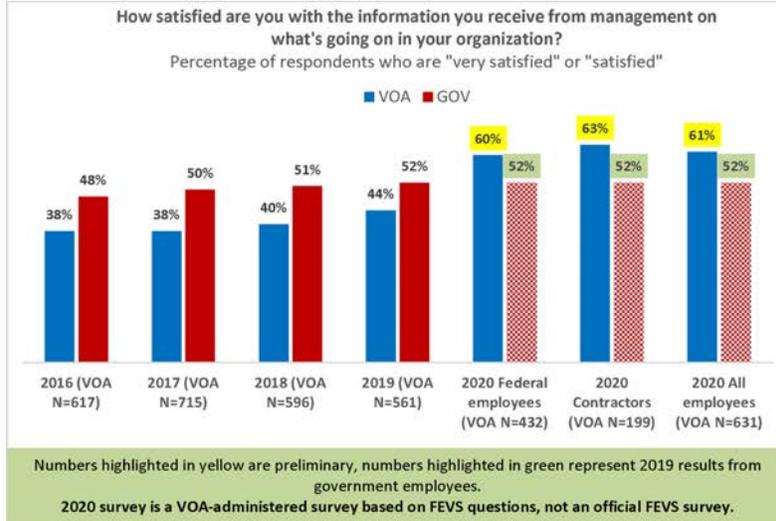
- 8 Town Hall meetings over the 4-year period, which on average received 24 advance questions and dozens more in person and drew 75-80 people in person and many more via livestreaming.
- 38 brown bag meetings with language services and other groups (division front office staff, producers, TV and radio techs etc.) and (as of June 9) 8 more scheduled. Between 10 and 30 people were invited to each meeting, depending on size of the language service, and usually about 75% of invitees attended.
- Cause for Applause program that every month recognized a contractor achievement.
- 158 Staff notes from Director over 4 years.

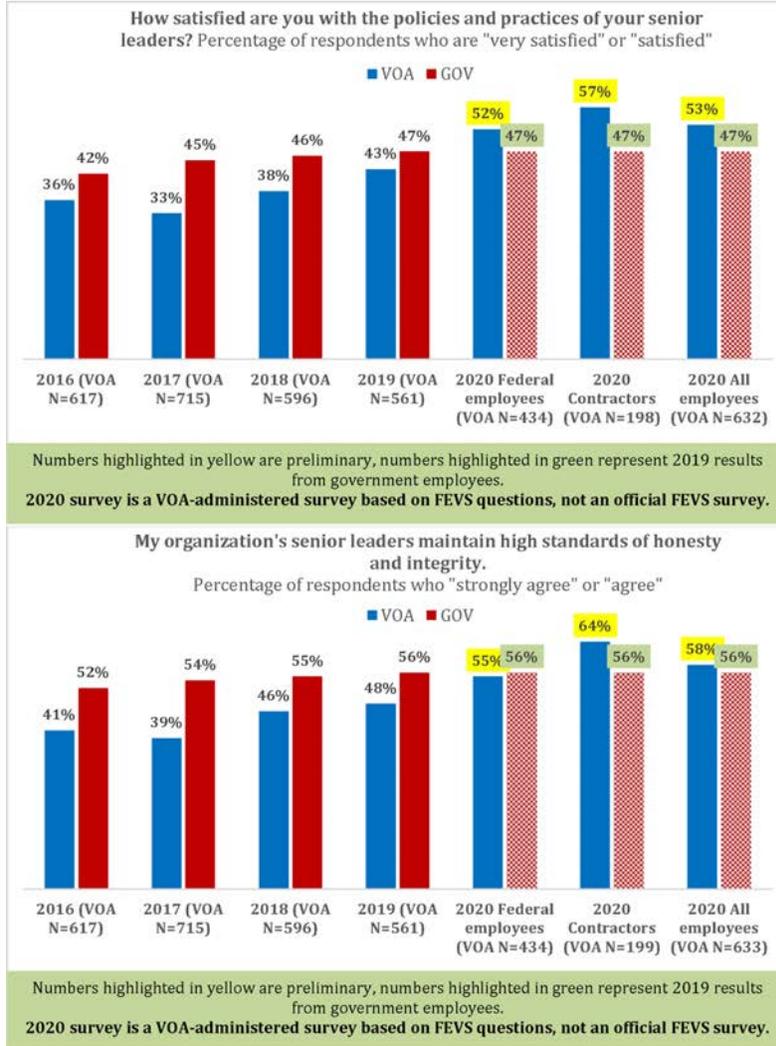
EMPLOYEE MORALE THEN: VOA and USAGM have, famously, been at the bottom of the U.S. government in employee morale according to the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, and ranked far below U.S. government average in most measures.

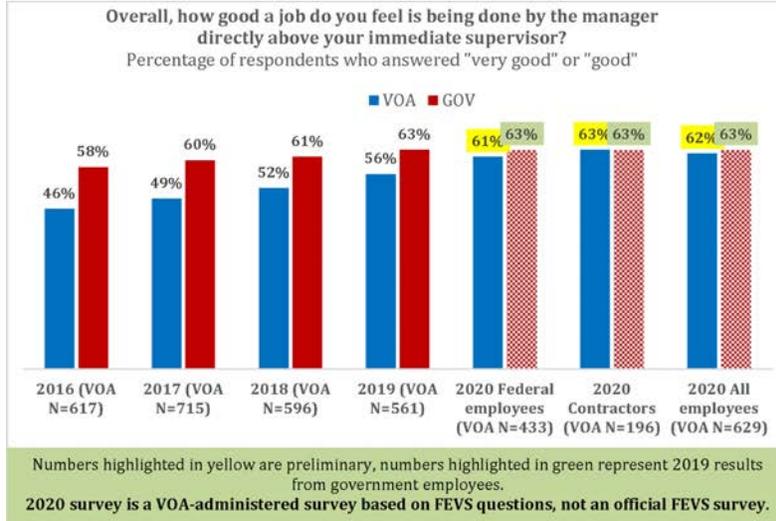
EMPLOYEE MORALE NOW: VOA has made substantial gains in all major measures of employee satisfaction between 2016 and 2019. The 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, normally launched

in May, was postponed in 2020 due to Coronavirus. Therefore -- particularly to sample employee morale in the midst of disruptions caused by remote work -- VOA launched a mini-sampling based on FEVS questions to at least give an indication of 2020 employee sentiment. **While not directly comparable to the FEVS results**, the mini-survey result indicated that employee morale had improved even further between 2019 and 2020. According to that survey Federal employee satisfaction on major measures had increased sharply 2016. This survey also polled contractors on the same questions -- for the first time they were ever included -- and found that their satisfaction levels were even higher.











SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATIONS

The Voice of America regularly delivers to its audiences live broadcasts with simultaneous translation of top U.S. events, including inauguration speeches, State of the Union addresses, and Senate and House debates, from the White House, Capitol Hill, the United Nations and other major sites. These broadcasts reach millions of viewers around the world.

AFRICA DIVISION

Simultaneous translation into French of the 2020 State of the Union Address

<https://www.facebook.com/VOAAfrique/videos/2729822713766980/>

Simultaneous translation into French of the 2019 State of the Union Address

<https://www.facebook.com/VOAAfrique/videos/vb.323279184682/352475135358888/?type=2&theater>

Simultaneous translation into French of the 2018 State of the Union Address

<https://www.facebook.com/VOAAfrique/videos/10156350107009683/?t=859>

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC DIVISION

VOA Town Virtual Town Hall: Global Experts Answer Your Questions (4/28/2020)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Kn-g6yZeXo>

State of the Union Address (2/4/2020)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gVFcxDYIE>

U.S.-China Trade Deal Phase One Signing Ceremony (1/14/2020)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpQDt9ldiOU>

POTUS Remarks on Iran 1/8/2020

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39N_Uqil_5o

VPOTUS Remarks on U.S.-China Relations (10/24/2019)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkCHHt3s4Xc>

POTUS Remarks at UNGA (9/24/2019)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9tg0aUC2Og>

Congressional Executive Commission on China Hearing on Hong Kong (9/17/2019)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tMuntaZ7WI>

POTUS Remarks at Salute to America (7/4/2019)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGZwZk1RC94>

POTUS Joint Press Conference with Korean President Moon (6/30/2019)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrydPe47lvs>

POTUS G20 Press Conference (6/29/2019)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyzDR6XrV7s>

Dan Southerland, Claudia Rosett, Al Pessin on live TV show (6/4/2019)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9s1EMBN1F4>

State of the Union Address (2/5/2019)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwrnbSC32sw>

VPOTUS Remarks on China Policy (10/4/2018)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8DtP3PB-gc>

POTUS Remarks at UNGA (9/25/2018)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aw-lwGoeH4A>

POTUS Joint Press Conference with Japanese PM (4/19/2018)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7uVw7fqw7QU>

State of the Union Address (1/30/2018)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RAofBdNyhrY>

POTUS Remarks at UNGA (9/19/2017)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwJPnrrn_BxA

House Hearing on Liu Xiaobo (7/14/2017)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UlpfX_KLPZo

CECC Hearing on China cracking down on human rights lawyers (6/28/2017)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2OV5RYpJZ4>

Senate Hearing on Nomination of Terry Branstad for US Ambassador to PRC (5/1/2017)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JujBREv7nt0>

Rep. Ami Bera pm TV show (3/27/2017)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-h6q0ubd1yc>

State of the Union Address (2/28/2017)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEBmvoBi0ms>

Presidential Inauguration (1/20/2017)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zR9ii9siQhg>

Rep. Joe Courtney on live TV (1/11/2017)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/3671904.html>

Third Presidential Debate and Town Hall Discussion (10/19/2016)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=daNGt8qfuiA>

Second Presidential Debate (10/9/2016)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OfiUgDdPlo>

First Presidential Debate (9/26/2016)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=657_XUq5ix8

Democratic Party Presidential Candidate Acceptance Speech (7/28/2016)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97Y-LXibD10>

Republican Party Presidential Candidate Acceptance Speech (7/21/2016)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2HDEQMzE>

EURASIA DIVISION

Since President Trump's evening address on March 11, 2020, the VOA Russian Service carried Presidential Press Briefings, including the White House Coronavirus Task Force Press Briefings, live with simultaneous translation on both Facebook and YouTube from March 13 to May 29 in their entirety. Examples include:

March 13, 2020 – President Trump announced the state of emergency in the United States:

<https://facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/2640931439471510/>

March 16, 2020

– <https://facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/vl.208883586841714/646027639495900/>

VOA Russian's live broadcast with simultaneous translation from the House floor of the impeachment trial of President Trump (December 18, 2019):

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=436839840325514&ref=watch_permalink

VOA Ukrainian's live stream with simultaneous translation of President Donald Trump's Inaugural Address:

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/1409411132426933/>

VOA Ukrainian's live stream with simultaneous translation of President Trump's speech in Warsaw:

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/1601475259887185/>

VOA Ukrainian's live stream with simultaneous translation of President Trump's speech on Iran:

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/630611311078759/>

VOA Ukrainian's live stream with simultaneous translation of President Trump's meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy in New York:

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/2580668871997458/>

VOA Ukrainian's live stream with simultaneous translation of President Trump's address at the U.N. General Assembly:

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/584831628719558/>

VOA Ukrainian live broadcast with simultaneous translation of an address by President Trump on the coronavirus pandemic:

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/613608089185041/>

VOA Ukrainian live broadcast with simultaneous translation of the swearing-in ceremony for Secretary of State Mike Pompeo:

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/1937393562962018/>

VOA Ukrainian live broadcast with simultaneous translation of a Senate hearing on new Russia sanctions and the misuse of social media by foreign propaganda:

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/1841455152555860/>

VOA Ukrainian Facebook Live with simultaneous interpretation of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on U.S.-Russia relations:

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/245602389627665/>

VOA Albanian broadcast live with simultaneous translation President Trump's inauguration January 20, 2017. The Service's TV show was extended from its regular 30 minutes to 1.5 hours.

<https://www.zeriamerikes.com/a/3685189.html>

VOA Armenian live broadcast with simultaneous translation of the historic SpaceX Crew Dragon launch from Cape Canaveral:

<https://www.facebook.com/amerikayidzayn/videos/2595164067466080/?vh=e&d=n>

VOA Armenian Facebook live broadcast with simultaneous translation of President Trump's White House Coronavirus Task Force press conference:

<https://www.facebook.com/amerikayidzayn/videos/553583342236289/?vh=e&d=n>

VOA Armenian Facebook live broadcast with simultaneous translation of President Trump's State of the Union address:

<https://www.facebook.com/amerikayidzayn/videos/207076703800860/?vh=e&d=n>

VOA Armenian Facebook live broadcast of Senator Bob Menendez announcing the Senate's passage of the Resolution he co-authored recognizing the Armenian Genocide Resolution:

<https://www.facebook.com/amerikayidzayn/videos/420437245503880/?vh=e&d=n>

LATIN AMERICA DIVISION

VOA offers the Haitian audience simultaneous interpretation of all major speeches by the president of the United States. Following is the Creole Service translation of President Trump's inauguration speech:

<https://www.voanouvel.com/a/nan-diskou-eta-inyon-an-prezidan-trump-mete-aksan-sou-reyalizasyon-pandan-3-denye-ane-li-sou-pouvwa-a/5275569.html>

President Trump State of the Union 2018 was translated into Spanish and broadcast live. The live event was also picked up by over two dozen TV Stations in the region, affiliates of the VOA Spanish Service.

<https://youtu.be/JDn1eX4jFE0>

State of the Union February 2017.

<https://youtu.be/62fBpXa8uug>

Special broadcast of President Trump's Inaugural Ceremony.
<https://youtu.be/ZcTnLCbursc>

PERSIAN DIVISION

President Trump's Inauguration
<https://ir.voanews.com/persiannewsamerica/us-inauguration>

Presidential State of the Union address
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-state-union-215801> (2019)
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-sotu-234322> (2020)

Presidential United Nations address
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/un-us-trump-22917> (2018)
<https://ir.voanews.com/a/un-us-trump-full/5096521.html> (2019)

President Trump remarks on U.S. defense strategy
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-trump-13506>

President Trump remarks on Iran deal
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/trump-complete-speech-47817>

President Trump at World Economic Forum in Davos
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/trump-davos-complete-speech-39661>

President Trump remarks on change to immigration law
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-trump-3991>

Vice President Mike Pence comments on U.S. policy toward Iran
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-pence-13653>

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo comments on human rights in Iran
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/nskhk-kaml-skhnran-y-mayk-pmpyw-dr-ajlas-wdyt-hqwq-bshr-dr-ayran-235698>

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo comments on new policy on Iran at the Heritage Foundation:
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-iran-pompeo-33570>

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo comments on the 2019 Religious Freedom report
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-pompeo-1709>

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo comments on NATO summit in Washington, D.C.
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-nato-6165>

SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA DIVISION

President Donald Trump's Inauguration
<https://www.darivoa.com/a/3665276.html?nocache=1>

President Trump's visit to Afghanistan:
<https://www.darivoa.com/a/5185285.html>

Live coverage of US-Taliban agreement in [Qatar](#):

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=3689322687808702&ref=watch_permalink

President Trump's State of the Union (2020) on radio and web:

<https://www.darivoa.com/a/5254909.html?nocache=1>

Live interview with Roland Kobia, EU Special Representative to Afghanistan:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3508025785905530>

President Trump's statement after [Iran's attack](#) on U.S. military bases in Iraq:

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=526093228000022&ref=watch_permalink

SpaceX Falcon 9 Rocket launch -- President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence in attendance:

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=252596482660971&ref=watch_permalink

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's presser about Afghanistan peace talks:

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=510374939913546&ref=watch_permalink

Announcement ceremony of U.S.-Afghanistan joint declaration between U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper and President Ghani:

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=510374939913546&ref=watch_permalink

President Trump's announcement of the "Deal of the Century" on [Israel-Palestine](#) peace:

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=1002127536825716&ref=watch_permalink

Special program via Facebook live on [Afghanistan's presidential elections](#):

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=397864657774529&ref=watch_permalink

Live coverage of the Cricket World Cup 2019 in England and Wales, which was one of the most successful digital coverages of the Afghanistan Service:

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=641368096331065&ref=watch_permalink

President Trump's policy for South Asia:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=216276119525280>

President Trump's State of the Union Speech (February 5, 2019):

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2306522819381710&ref=watch_permalink

President Trump announces his Middle East Peace Plan in White House-FB Live with simultaneous translation (January 28, 2020):

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=612673949554653&ref=watch_permalink

Trump-Erdogan press conference at the White House – Facebook Live with simultaneous translation (November 13, 2019):

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=436300313934269&ref=watch_permalink

President Trump makes a statement on Syria in White House – Facebook Live with simultaneous translation (October 23, 2019):

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=686582958502223&ref=watch_permalink

Interview with former CIA director Leon Panetta on Jamal Kashoggi's murder at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. The interview on October 22, 2018, was widely shared by other media outlets in Turkey:

<https://www.amerikanin sesi.com/a/eski-cia-direktoru-kasikci-olayini-voa-turkceye-degerlendirdi/4624361.html>

Interview with the State Department's Special Representative in charge of Counterterrorism [Ambassador Nathan Sales](#) on defeating ISIS and the repatriation of the foreign fighters at the height of the controversy with the European countries:

<https://www.amerikanin sesi.com/a/%C4%B1sid-mucadele-suriye-teror-yabanci-terorist/4843041.html>

President Trump's speech at the United Nations General Assembly:

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2326065944114636&ref=watch_permalink

President Trump South Asia/Afghanistan Strategy, August 21, 2017:

<https://www.voadeewanews.com/a/3995368.html>

TELLING AMERICA'S STORY

VOA's mission is to tell America's story objectively and present a balanced and comprehensive projection of significant American thought and institutions, providing context and explaining America's policies and America's way of life. VOA does so 24/7 across multiple platforms, from television to next-generation digital and social media in multiple formats – video, graphics, radio and text.

NEWS CENTER

VOA Connect:

VOA Connect brings together stories of people across the United States and around the world, from a virtual reality brain surgeon ushering in a new age of medicine to a Vietnam War vet connecting to the daughter he never knew. It's a place to meet street artists and high tech innovators, and everyone in between.

<https://www.voanews.com/voa-connect>

Some of the reports from the series:

Charmaine Teodoro is a Filipina recruited to teach math at a rural school in Colorado experiencing a teacher shortage. Now in her second year and on a J-1 visa, Teodoro talks about her future plans, the challenges she faced in her first year, and the cultural differences between the two countries, especially when teaching teenagers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSmthSYE8pg>

Say hello to Denise Tyus, an African American cowgirl who's been competing in rodeos for most of her adult life. We talk to her about the sport, the role African Americans have played in the Old West, and ride along with her as she competes at the rodeo.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNusMKgg9Dg>

Dr. Quenton Fontenot, the Head of Biological Sciences at Nicholls State University, talks about the effects of climate and coastal waterway change in Louisiana. We also learn about his Cajun heritage and a music preservation organization he founded.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6p-8jWKcLl>

The small town of Cody, Nebraska, population 150, might have suffered the fate of many rural communities in America and faded away. But the people of Cody realized a simple trick: build a grocery store and people will come.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6aleytr7m9E>

A shrub that grows in the wild is the only caffeinated plant native to North America. Jason Ellis discovered how to make tea with it in the Native Americans tradition.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEjve02Ajlq>

We follow the heartwarming story about the Hurst family in Midland, Michigan, who adopted three kids from China with developmental disabilities, two of whom were born without eyes. We visit some of the professionals supporting them and see how music therapy is playing a key role in overcoming their lack of sight and developmental problems. Witness the moment where Evie, the youngest child, sings during a medical exam - a moment that touched millions of viewers on social media.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVYG2lPHL_8

What does it take to get the perfect lobster to your dinner plate? Tom Martin, a longtime Maine lobsterman, explains what he and his peers do to ensure that lobsters remain plentiful in his state.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcpH_gZuo9o

Go to rural North Dakota, and if you are lucky, you might find the tiny town of Kief. Its heritage and namesake are from Ukraine, but the residents that still are left in this one-time small railway stop talk about how things used to be.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJP6Eg_WAMc

We head to the simple life at a homestead in Arkansas where Gary McWilliams and his family grow their own food. Along with milking cows, growing crops and raising chickens, he also owns a production company and hosts a YouTube show, The Farm Hand's Companion, about farming the old-fashioned way.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5BixA5v9eIo>

A game-seeking trip into the woods with Eric Morris, an African-American outdoorsman who works to foster diversity in hunting. VOA Connect will be looking at American attitudes towards guns throughout the coming months.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdR8RpWg-os>

Brian Damewood used to be a television news reporter, but today he's an award-winning auctioneer. He explains how being a good auctioneer is about knowing your customers, knowing the product and finding the right rhythm.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxzAG3GrxSc>

Love and Barbecue

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/love-and-barbecue-3779171>

Church in the dirt

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/church-dirt-3970381>

Alvie and the Ozarks

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMVY180iv_g

Plugged In with Greta Van Susteren:

Plugged In With Greta Van Susteren – A weekly news show about current affairs anchored by Greta Van Susteren. The show examines various aspects of U.S. policy by interviewing policy makers and having discussions with opinion shapers.

<https://www.voanews.com/plugged-greta-van-susteren>

Plugged In: Singapore Summit

What's next after the historic Singapore summit between President Trump and North Korea's Kim Jong Un? The leaders agreed to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, but the document they signed contains few details. Greta Van Susteren is in Singapore, where she talked to President Trump immediately after the meeting.

<https://youtu.be/nSc1i8rYB4g>

Guests: President Donald Trump
Ngoei Wen-Qing, Nanyang Technology University
Tai Wei Lim, National University of Singapore

Plugged In: Argentina 2018 G20 Summit

This week's Plugged In looks at two major stories: the death of the 41st U.S. president, George H.W. Bush, and the assembly of world leaders at the G-20 summit in Argentina. VOA's Plugged In team

was there to cover the major developments. The show includes exclusive interviews with U.S. President Donald Trump and Singapore Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat, as well as analysis from VOA correspondents around the world.

<https://youtu.be/wMaYI7v3-ZA>

Guests: President Donald Trump
Singapore Minister of Finance Heng Swee Keat

Plugged In: Saudi Balance of Power

This week Plugged In examines the international fallout from the death of Jamal Khashoggi, presumably at the hands of Saudi security forces with close ties to the Crown Prince. Could the killing of the prominent journalist and critic of the Saudi royal family upset the balance of power in the Middle East? And can the United States afford to remain steadfast to an ally seen increasingly around the world as ruthless? Our guests include U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Former U.S. ambassador Gerald Feierstein and analysis from senior VOA correspondents.

<https://youtu.be/ocPjlxGtfzI>

Guests: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo
Former U.S. Ambassador to Yemen Gerald Feierstein

Plugged In: Haiti, The Politics of Survival

"Plugged In with Greta Van Susteren" for December 11, 2019: Haiti: The Politics of Survival." Political and economic instability in Haiti is generating daily protests against the government. With little to show for billions of dollars in reconstruction aid and after a devastating earthquake, what is next for the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere? Featuring interviews with President of Haiti, Jovenel Moise, an opposition leader and Haitian expats. Guest host Mil Arcega and the Plugged In team delve deeper.

<https://youtu.be/9DMAHquKx0M>

Guests: President of Haiti Jovenel Moise (translated)
Haiti Opposition Party Leader Reginald Boulos
U.S. Ambassador to OAS Carlos Trujillo
Attorney, Albert Decady
Former Obama Presidential Appointee Cleve Mesidor

Plugged In: U.S. – Venezuela, Sanctions and Secret Talks

"Plugged In with Greta Van Susteren" for August 28, 2019: "US – Venezuela: Sanctions and Secret Talks." The governments of the United States and Venezuela confirm ongoing secret negotiations to decide the fate of a country wracked by food shortages and economic collapse. Featuring interviews with White House National Security Advisor John Bolton and Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido.

<https://youtu.be/66GRUWYAKlo>

Guests: U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton
Interim Venezuelan President Juan Guaido
Former Ambassador Patrick Duddy

Plugged In: Venezuela, A Humanitarian Crisis in the Americas

Millions of Venezuelans have fled to neighboring countries due to a growing crisis that has brought shortages of food and medicine, and a government crackdown. The country with the largest proven oil reserve in the world has slashed five zeros from its currency to try to control hyperinflation. On this week's show, you will hear from a chief justice of the Venezuelan Supreme Court currently in exile, a former U.S. ambassador, a chief of staff for the secretary general of the Organization of American States, and VOA's Spanish Service Correspondent Celia Mendoza.

<https://youtu.be/6bAAP5n3wzo>

Guests: Venezuelan Chief Justice in Exile Miguel Angel Martin (Translated)
Former U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela Patrick Duddy
Venezuelan TV Host (EVES TV) Jesus Silva
OAS Official Gonzalo Koncke

Greta Van Susteren interviews former President Jimmy Carter, the 39th president of the United States from 1977 to 1981. Greta talks to Carter about the landmark agreement that ushered in a new era in U.S.-Sino relations and interviews experts on the current state of affairs and what the next 40 years might hold.

<https://youtu.be/yhlQIAFE0Co>

Plugged In: The Rohingya Crisis

A year after a crackdown on Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar caused 700,000 people to flee to neighboring Bangladesh, UN investigators are accusing top military officials in Myanmar of genocide and other human rights abuses. Greta Van Susteren and her guests discuss those allegations and the ongoing refugee crisis in Bangladesh.

<https://youtu.be/RkG3w1pl.x68>

Guests: U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL)
Myanmar Ambassador U Aung Lynn
Kerry Kennedy, Human Rights Activist

Plugged In: Hong Kong Protests

Four months in and still no end to the massive protests in Hong Kong. Guest host Patsy Widakuswara and the Plugged In team take us to the streets of the former British colony for a look at how mistrust over a controversial extradition bill has morphed into deeper suspicions about China's growing political influence. Plugged In: Hong Kong Protests for Democracy.

<https://youtu.be/Rrg03HNzTe8>

Guests: Richard Bush, Brookings Institution
Eric Lai, Vice Convenor, Civil Human Rights Front
Charles Mok, Pro-Democracy Lawyer
Daniel Fung, Cambridge Global Conversations

Plugged In: 2018 U.S. Midterm Elections

The battle for control of the U.S. Congress. Will this election have implications for the Trump administration's political and international agenda? Our guests are: spokesperson for former Florida Governor Jeb Bush, Justin Sayfie; former Florida Congressman Patrick Murphy; Washington Post columnist Karen Tumulty; VOA Correspondent Jim Malone, plus several VOA correspondents around the world.

<https://youtu.be/7vt4Si0GVbw>

Guests: Former Florida Congressman Patrick Murphy
Justin Sayfie, Government Relations Consultant
Karen Tumulty, *Washington Post* Columnist

Plugged In: Protests in America

Unrest and protests in American cities following the death of a black man in police custody in Minneapolis. President Donald Trump promises to restore order. Plugged In looks at the history of law enforcement and government reaction.

<https://youtu.be/klR6zf0jxCg>

Guest: Prof. Paniel Joseph, LBJ School of Public Affairs

Plugged In: Coronavirus Outbreak

China: Coronavirus Outbreak. The death toll from a newly discovered virus is rising and the world is taking note. Travel restrictions and quarantines are now in place around the globe. Plugged In will tell you what you need to know about coronavirus outbreak in China.

<https://youtu.be/-vkKFwTynQ8>

Guests: Dr. Anthony Fauci, National Institute of Health
Lawrence Gostin, O'Neil Institute for National & Global Health Law

Plugged In: Downing in Plastics

Nearly 8 million metric tons of plastic ends up in our oceans every year. And it's not just clogging our waterways, it's also killing wildlife. Is the United States and the rest of the world doing enough to stave off an environmental catastrophe?

<https://youtu.be/rhRNQDmloaA>

Guests: Victor Vescovo, Insight Equity
U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK)
Bea Johnson, Author

Plugged In: Treating Ebola in Africa

Ebola again threatens to spread death through Africa. Follow along with U.S. health officials leading the response to contain this latest health crisis. VOA Producer Mil Arcega travels to Africa with an American delegation.

https://youtu.be/EHQSLapek_Y

Guests: Health and Human Services Secretary, Alex Azar
Dr. Anthony Fauci, National Institute of Health
Dr. Malonga Miatudila, Public Health Independent Consultant

Plugged In: U.S.-China Trade Dispute

The U.S. believes higher tariffs against Chinese goods can help level the playing field and reduce the massive trade imbalance between the two countries, but China is fighting back with its own tariffs. Who wins and who pays? Greta takes a look at the escalating trade war between the world's two largest economies.

<https://youtu.be/u7oQyXC6Hh8>

Guests: U.S Senator, Charles Grassley (R-Iowa)
Laura M. Baughman, Trade Partnership Worldwide, LLC

Special Coverage:

Covering the opioid series, following students in the aftermath of a high school shooting or travelling to rural America asking questions to get the pulse of the heartland of America in topics like immigration, terrorism and religion.

The Damage Done – Living America's Opioids Nightmare: The U.S. Opioid epidemic rages on. Most of the toll, about two thirds, involves pain pills, heroin and -increasingly- the potent synthetic opioid fentanyl. Drug overdoses are the top cause of death for adults under 50. And as bad as the estimates seem, researches say actual overdose deaths may be 20 to 35 percent higher. VOA journalists Chris Simkins and Jeff Swicord spent all of 2018 documenting stories from the epidemic's front lines. Their series, "The damage done", follows Americans in three cities - Miami, Philadelphia, and Nashville, NC – where lives and neighborhoods have been tragically transformed by heroin and other opioid drugs.

<https://projects.voanews.com/opioids/>

After Parkland – On Valentine’s Day 2018, an expelled student walked into Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., and opened fire with an AR-15 semiautomatic rifle. Fourteen teenagers and three coaches died. Parkland students and parents decided school shootings must end. They channeled grief into action, launching a campaign to halt school violence. America’s gun-rights activists responded in a ringing national debate.

https://www.voanews.com/parkland?utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=voa-special-projects&utm_source=homepage&_ga=2.17283696.855072858.1591372358-1615620683.1591231353

Project 1619 – A project dedicated to the arrival of the first Africans in colonial America. It takes you on a journey from the shores of Angola to the shores of Virginia. In August of 1619, Africans from Angola landed at Port Comfort, now known as Fort Monroe National Monument. There are nine videos on the page, plus an article by Carol Guensburg and Chris Simkins with lots of details about the 400th anniversary of slavery in America. To read it, click on the headline – Slavery’s Bitter Roots: The US Marks the 400th Anniversary of the Arrival of the First Africans.

<https://www.voanews.com/africa-america>

Off The Highway – VOA reporters travel to a stretch of rural counties along the upper Mississippi River that turned from “blue” to “red” – supporting Democrat Barack Obama, then backing Republican Donald Trump in 2016. They spoke to farmers and carpenters, factory workers and retirees in these overwhelmingly white, Christian, working and middle class communities, those hoping for change, and those tired of it. These are their stories.

<https://projects.voanews.com/off-the-highway/>

Some of the reports from the series:

For more than half a century, efforts to uphold the constitution’s separation of church and state has been viewed by some as an attack on Christian values, from the banning of school-sponsored prayer in the 1960s to more recent efforts to curb discrimination based on religious principles. In the overwhelmingly Christian county of Jo Daviess, Illinois, the feeling of a religion under siege continues. <https://projects.voanews.com/off-the-highway/video/58226-centrality-of-religion>

Big government drives big suspicions. Despite the benefits he reaps, a former farmer wants an intrusive Washington out of his life.

<https://projects.voanews.com/off-the-highway/story/58258-big-government-drives-big-suspicions>

Rural Illinois Trump Supporters Distrust News Media

<https://projects.voanews.com/off-the-highway/story/61516-rural-illinois-trump-supporters-distrust-news-media>

Fading small towns – The history of the United States is one of urbanization: at its founding, only five percent of Americans lived in cities; a century ago, half of the population did; today, the number stands at 80 percent. Yet the idealized vision of rural and small town life lingered far longer in the popular imagination than reality.

<https://projects.voanews.com/off-the-highway/video/58268-fading-small-towns>

Silicon Valley & Technology:

In another unprecedented move that shows the commitment of the current leadership to showcase America's best, without any new funding the News Center's opened in 2017 its Silicon Valley bureau. The bureau has become an anchor for VOA's tech coverage and because of it, VOA's profile is growing in Silicon Valley, with tech companies and entrepreneurs learning about the important overseas audiences that VOA reaches. The bureau produces tech stories for the web, as well as TV packages and the segment Log On, a weekly two-minute tech piece that shows VOA audiences some of the most exciting tech developments in the U.S. Additionally, the Silicon Valley bureau's is equipped with a studio available for language services to send guests to be interviewed for their programming.

<https://www.voanews.com/silicon-valley-technology>

Some of the reports about technology:

Pediatric neurosurgeons at Stanford are using virtual reality to practice surgeries.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/virtual-reality-used-practice-childrens-brain-surgeries-4287461>

Kids are incentivized to monitor lung health with game.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/new-asthma-device-app-helps-kids-improve-lung-health-4264576>

Imagine wearing a device that allows you to communicate your thoughts directly to a machine; researchers and companies have been working on this type of technology and coming out with devices that can read your brain signals.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/logon-using-brain-control-electronic-devices-4211551>

SETI Institute and telescope maker Unistellar to crowdsource data from thousands of consumer telescopes to expand horizons farther.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/powerful-telescope-partners-citizen-astronomers-pros-4178396>

According to a United Nations study, the world produces enough food waste to feed as many as 2 billion people each year. A tech startup has a goal to get that food to those who need it.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/tech-company-takes-food-waste-4125186>

Bioengineers are working on 3D-printed tissues that may one day be implanted into humans.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/3d-printed-tissues-bioengineers-are-one-step-closer-3d-printed-organs-4061856>

A look at the past and future of virtual reality and other visual tech tools.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/vision-future-reality-enhanced-technology-3939316>

5G will make our smartphones run faster. Here's what it means for everyone else from retailers to firefighters.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/5g-lab-startups-get-first-dibs-ultra-fast-network-3931586>

It may be years before self-driving cars take us where we want to go. In the meantime, car companies are already incorporating self-driving technologies to make cars safer. One is a sensor called Lidar, a laser beam that bounces off objects and is used to make 3-D maps in real time.

Michelle Quinn took a look at this sensor that allows cars to see.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/lasers-give-car-eyes-see-world-3896841>

Live Events:

Here are a few examples of events, addresses and hearings that the News Center streamed live in its digital platforms. Streaming live is one of the best ways VOA has to explain America story and America's policies in real time.

Inauguration

Trump Inauguration Speech:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mn-HvdmV6Vk>

UNGA

2019 Trump Addresses the UNGA:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dR3PBajFsGY&t=1s>

President Trump Press Conference in NY on the sidelines of UNGA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qM8Wjv3f-cw>

State of the Union:

U.S. President Donald Trump gives his second State of the Union, addressing a new class of Congress that has a record number of minorities and women.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUH-6EPZ-Lc>

Stacey Abrams gives the Democratic response to the State of the Union, becoming the first African-American woman to deliver the address.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Ssu-KP33ZQ>

Democratic Response to the 2018 State of the Union

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1M0X-8uGeO4>

Congressional Hearings:

LIVE: Brett Kavanaugh and Christine Blasey Ford testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-H76x4c7kk&t=1s>

Brett Kavanaugh and Christine Blasey Ford testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee - part two

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3lbgX2gLo8>

LIVE: Attorney General Jeff Sessions Testifies Before the Senate Intelligence Committee

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5XJFKrBncnc>

LIVE: Former FBI Director James Comey Testifies Before the Senate Intelligence Committee

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evlBQSQwo4U&t=76s>

Extremist Content and Russian Disinformation Online: Working with Tech to Find Solutions

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZVONRRaWu0>

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi Announces Formal Impeachment Inquiry of Trump

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vleG1npWZOY>

Trump Bilateral Meetings and Addresses:

The US President and British Prime Minister hold a joint press conference during Trump's visit to the UK.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Dk4z3Cokl0>

President Trump and French President Macron Hold Joint Press Conference

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuW0r1ffyro&t=5s>

LIVE: Trump Announces IS Leader Baghdadi is Dead

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0YsVol.HWnA>

President Trump Holds A Press Conference With Japanese Prime Minister Abe

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79gLm7qtX_I

President Donald Trump and first lady Melania greet Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and his wife Jenny Warren at the White House as they arrive for an official visit Friday, September 20

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CQZYWetljk>

President Donald Trump Makes Speech to Venezuelan American Community

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVx7mSvrC90>

President Trump Holds a Joint Press Conference with Australian Prime Minister Turnbull

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rP0d8CKNIdd>

U.S. President Donald Trump Welcomes Canadian PM Trudeau at White House

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ix09m936hVU>

US President Trump and UK PM May Hold a Joint News Conference

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLGQrr6-Pl0>

Trump and Merkel Press Conference

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IBsMjCBd8E>

President Trump hosts a joint press conference with Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5IEUJKC9s4>

Trump-Kim Summit: Donald Trump Press Conference

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMFhg_ff_7w

President Trump Makes Announcement on Government Shutdown

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVNxE3euw8>

President Trump Delivers Statement on Situation in Syria

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRuDw_Lx1IA

Hanoi Summit: President Trump Holds a News Conference

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3EalmgrNNA>

President Trump Holds a Joint Press Conference with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven of Sweden

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FdQl67f6BQ>

G7 - JOINT NEWS CONFERENCE: President Trump and President Macron

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFRcjghUel8&list=PLMWxa->

[uE499HESUm7Kbk7dA232U_piBdn&index=4&t=0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFRcjghUel8&list=PLMWxa-)

President Donald Trump Holds a White House News Conference on the Coronavirus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0JEmRpkIBQ>

Other

The State Funeral for George H.W. Bush at Washington National Cathedral

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ORTXArJmny>

Total Solar Eclipse

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sX6NT_TgHwM

AFRICA DIVISION

Africa Division reports on the aftermath of the death of George Floyd in police custody and the ensuing protests in the United States.

<https://business.facebook.com/voasomali1/videos/272991877160939/> (Somali)

<https://www.facebook.com/130891893498/videos/1388264124691167> (Hausa)

NBA players Cheick Diallo and Mo Bamba joined VOA Bambara for a social media video about coronavirus safety measures.

<https://www.facebook.com/VOABambara/videos/273092027039754/?sfns=mo>

Somali Service reported on a Minneapolis restaurant delivering free meals to older and disabled Minnesotans stuck at home during the coronavirus lockdown.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/us-somali-deli-delivers-cheer-along-free-food-elderly-disabled> (English)

With the Coronavirus pandemic and places of worship being closed during Eid celebrations after Ramadan, one Masjid in Laurel, Maryland, listened to the president's directive to open but following safety orders. VOA Hausa attended the Eid prayer.

<https://www.facebook.com/130891893498/videos/342449646735069/>

This edition of the Hausa-language show *Duniyar Amurka (American Stories)* focused on how professors conduct virtual classes to their students from home as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The feature hosted a Nigerian lecturer, Shamsuddeen Magaji, who teaches Hausa at Georgia University.

<https://bit.ly/2Uul,T1>

French to Africa's daily TV show *Le Monde Aujourd'hui* has a regular English-teaching segment:

<https://www.voafrique.com/a/anglais-express-/3862490.html>

The Africa Division sent three services to cover the 2020 Iowa caucuses:

<https://www.voaswahili.com/a/5273472.html> (Swahili)

<https://www.voafrique.com/a/les-am%C3%A9ricains-vont-pouvoir-choisir-le-candidat-qui-les-repr%C3%A9sentera-aux-%C3%A9lections-pr%C3%A9sidentielles-du-3-novembre/5271778.html> (French)

<https://www.voahausa.com/a/taskar-voa-shirin-taskar-voa-na-wannan-makon-kenan-/5288852.html> (Hausa)

This edition of *Straight Talk Africa* explores initiatives in education that create a bridge between Africa and the United States.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-3WF4LVIA>

VOA French covered the inauguration of the new NBA-sponsored Basketball Africa League:

<https://www.voafrique.com/a/la-basketball-africa-league-d%C3%A9voile-ses-12-%C3%A9quipes/5298778.html>

VOA Africa profiled the first Angolan basketball player in the NBA.

<https://www.voafrique.com/a/page-sports-bruno-fernando-premier-joueur-angolais-de-la-nba/5209713.html> (French)

<https://www.voaportugues.com/a/bruno-fernando-faz-hist%C3%B3ria-como-primeiro-angolano-na-nba/5212517.html> (Portuguese)

VOA Africa's coverage of the 2020 State of the Union:

https://business.facebook.com/voaportugues/videos/493734637995513/?business_id=10152558896439825 (Portuguese)

<https://www.voashona.com/a/zimbabwe-trump-state-of-the-union-address/5274487.html> (Shona)

<https://www.voandebele.com/a/5274472.html> (Ndebele)

VOA Africa Division reporters in Texas covered an increase in African migrants crossing through Mexico interviewed U.S. Border Patrol Section Chief Raul Ortiz and with asylum-seekers from Congo and Angola:

<https://www.voafrique.com/a/4997384.html> (French)

<https://www.voafrique.com/a/le-r%C3%A9ave-am%C3%A9ricain-au-bout-des-doigts/5439417.html?nocache=1> (French)

As part of VOA's 1619 project marking the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first African slaves to the United States, Africa Division reporters traveled to Angola where they heard accounts of the fierce resistance to the slave trade.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/slave-records-angola-show-exploitation-and-resistance-3973971> (English)

<https://www.voaportugues.com/a/especial-1619-escravatura-um-tema-delicado-nas-salas-de-aula-angolanas/5050146.html> (Portuguese)

VOA Swahili covered the 2018 Kenyan Cultural Diaspora Festival in Atlanta, Georgia, where the theme was "Shunning tribal difference, while appreciating cultural authenticity."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFOde0Kg4lg>

VOA Amharic reported from an Ethiopian diaspora sports and cultural festival in Atlanta.

<https://www.facebook.com/voaamharic/videos/1576040812533472/>

VOA Tigrigna reported from an Eritrean diaspora sports festival in Minneapolis.

<https://www.facebook.com/VOATigrigna/videos/498536157631119/>

A multimedia series on hair braiding in African immigrant communities produced by the French to Africa Service explored the importance of hair braiding cultural practices for African immigrants.

<https://www.voafrique.com/a/le-r%C3%AAve-am%C3%A9ricain-au-bout-des-doigts/5439417.html?nocache=1> (French)

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/african-hair-braiders-4222111> (English)

VOA Africa's coverage of the 2019 State of the Union and the Democratic response:

<https://www.voahausa.com/a/raayoyin-wasu-yan-najeriya-kan-jawabin-shugaba-trump/4775778.html> (Hausa)

<https://www.facebook.com/VOAafrique/videos/vb.323279184682/352475135358888/?type=2&theater> (French)

<https://business.facebook.com/voaamharic/videos/294392531273182/> (Amharic)

<https://www.voaportugues.com/a/presidente-trump-apela-à-unidade-com-democratas-mas-mantem-se-firme-na-questão-da-imigração-ilegal/4774632.html> (Portuguese)

<https://www.voaswahili.com/a/trump-atoa-wito-wa-mwisho-juu-ya-ujenzi-wa-ukuta/4774764.html> (Swahili)

<https://www.voashona.com/a/zimbabwe-america-trump-state-of-the-union/4774714.html> (Shona)

<https://www.voandebele.com/a/4774685.html> (Ndebele)

A French-to-Africa multi-part series on transracial adoptions in the United States highlighted unique challenges these adoptions pose both for children adopted by parents of a different race, and for the parents themselves:

<https://www.voafrique.com/a/enfant-noir-famille-blanche-episode-1-nous-voyons-la-couleur/5166172.html> (French)

<https://projects.voanews.com/adoption-lessons/> (English)

Ahmed Burhan Mohamed told VOA Somali he was proud after becoming the first American to win the prestigious Dubai International Quran Recitation Contest.

<https://www.facebook.com/voasomali1/videos/1839468649408861/>

The Horn of Africa Service covered the funeral of Ermias Joseph Asghedom, an American-Eritrean rapper known as Nipsey Hussle.

<https://business.facebook.com/voamharic/videos/453158372094682/>

VOA French to Africa produced a series of reports on African artists trying to make it in Hollywood:

<https://www.voafrique.com/a/hollywood-personnages-deguises/4361465.html>

<https://www.voafrique.com/a/de-jeunes-cineastes-africains-a-hollywood/3500706.html>

"If I'm here and I see a fire, I will run like hell. I would run away, and the people were running away. But for him to have that courage and get people out," Kwabena Mensah told VOA Africa about his son Emmanuel, who died saving others from a New York City apartment fire. Following is a link to the profile of the 26-year-old Ghanaian immigrant and U.S. National Guardsman:

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/ghanaian-american-who-rescued-families-deadly-fire-leaves-heroic-legacy-3778876>

VOA French to Africa sent a reporter to Hollywood to cover the 2018 Academy Awards.

<https://www.voafrique.com/a/vous-et-nous-les-oscars-2018/4278171.html> (French)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tn1RslVM2iE> (English)

VOA Horn of Africa Service held a roundtable with three Ethiopian professionals working in leadership positions at Amazon, Microsoft and Boeing in Seattle. One of them, Mekonen Kassa, is now the director of Global IT Infrastructure Service at Microsoft.

https://business.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=1654100624621142&ref=watch_permalink

Somali refugee Asad Hussein went from the world's largest refugee camp, Dadaab in Kenya, to Princeton University.

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/refugee-camp-young-somali-lands-spot-princeton>

"I would say if you are young, make sure you do your Mama's dish," Minnesota businessman Tashitaa Tufaa told VOA. "Work starts in your mom's kitchen." The Horn of Africa story on the Ethiopian Refugee who has achieved the American Dream was the most-read article on voanews.com. Three days after the VOA story was published, Fox News interviewed Tashitaa.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/dishwasher-millionaire-ethiopian-refugee-achieves-american-dream>

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/american-dream-is-alive-and-well-for-african-immigrant-entrepreneur>

Washington Wizards center Ian Mahinmi told VOA Africa Division reporters about traveling to Benin for a NBA youth camp with his Benin-born father. "The love that they showed me and the welcoming, from the minute we got out of the plane until the last minute, was tremendous."

<https://www.voanews.com/arts-culture/washington-wizards-show-nbas-global-reach>

VOA Portuguese produced a story on capoeira, an Afro-Brazilian martial art form that is becoming increasingly popular in the United States.

<https://www.voaportugues.com/a/angola-amor-capoeira-vai-agarrar-te/3923493.html>

Followig are links to the reporting on the inauguration of President Donald J. Trump:

<https://business.facebook.com/voafrica54/videos/1272687512784960/> (English)

<https://www.voafrique.com/a/investiture-de-donald-trump/3684321.html> (French)

VOA's Africa Division covered the U.S. elections extensively on radio, television and social media. VOA Horn of Africa, Swahili, Zimbabwe, Portuguese, Somali, French and Bambara expanded their radio programming for a total of five hours to report live on the vote count across the United States and particularly the battleground states. Following are some links:

<https://www.facebook.com/voaswahili/videos/1270388449670153/> (Swahili)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scdOsTWqroM> (French)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKcss4UJrbU> (English)

The Africa Division multimedia project *Beyond the Unicorn* explored the contributions of African entrepreneurs working in Silicon Valley.

<https://projects.voanews.com/beyond-the-unicorn/>

How the Africa Division covered the 2017 U.S. presidential inauguration:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1w6W-eNlvss>

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC DIVISION

A New York Teenager Started Camps for Physically Challenged Students (2/4/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/good-sport-nation-nyc-02042020/5273162.html>

Remembering MLK – Americans reflect the spirit and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1/21/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/mlk-day-american-people-20200120/5253200.html>

Santa Amazon: Behind the Scenes in Amazon's Distribution Center in the Holiday Season (12/7/2019)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/5195775.html>

Bringing Broadband to Rural America an Ongoing Quest: Individuals, companies and government are making an endeavor to bring broadband internet to more and more rural households (11/8/2019)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/5157868.html>

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/5157920.html>

American Rural Development Programs: Girls Coding Camp (11/1/2019)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/5148575.html>

An Unexpected Collection of 43 Presidential Busts (8/14/2019)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/the-unexpected-journey-of-the-presidents-heads-walk-into-america-20190814/5040745.html>

Made In USA Bike Factory Create Jobs in Detroit (8/5/2019)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-china-trade-tariffs-20190805/5029279.html>

A Prison Transformed into a Museum (5/24/2019)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/transform-prison-into-arts-center-and-museum-walk-into-america-20190524/4930999.html>

Where Does American Trash Go? (5/3/2019)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/4900965.html>

- Hyphenated America: Immigration Experiences in America (4/13/2019)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/hyphen-american-walk-into-america-20190413/4873451.html>
- Reenactment: Military Through the Ages (3/29/2019)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/military-through-the-ages-walk-into-america-20190329/4853651.html>
- President's Day Celebration – Parades, celebrations and traditions about President's Day (2/19/2019)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/4792830.html>
- The Fight for Congressional Gold Medals for Chinese American Veterans (11/6/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/chinese-american-veterans/4640131.html>
- Exhibition: Jim Crow and Civil Rights in the South (9/15/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/ny-black-citizenship-20180914/4572812.html>
- Sustainable Urban Farming: A Rice, Vegetable and Fish Market in Brooklyn (9/8/20)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/farm-in-brooklyn-20180907/4562401.html>
- 100th Anniversary of Women in the U.S. Marines (8/15/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/women-in-marine-20180814/4529097.html>
- Recycling Material for Art (5/19/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/art-materials-20180518/4400420.html>
- New York Wheelchair Ice Hockey Team (2/9/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-sled-rangers-20180208/4245240.html>
- Exhibition: Native Americans? Americans? (1/25/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/news-american-indians-everywhere-20180124/4222235.html>
- Silicon Valley Moms Tackle Child Care Shortage with Technology: Three moms from different backgrounds develop online platform for affordable on-demand child care service (12/30/2017)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/child-daycare-20171229/4185383.html>
- Femininity Coach Empowers Transgender Women (12/15/2017)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aa8-RVvvlI&t=11s>
- Small Enough to Jail: The only Chinese Bank Charged during Financial Crisis (10/5/2017)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/abacus-bank-20171004/4057196.html>
- Ai Weiwei Installation Art for Refugees (10/3/2017).
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/video-20171013-ai-weiwei-ny/4068814.html>
- Police's Eye in the Sky: A Visit to Fairfax County Police Helicopter Unit (9/8/2017)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/wia-behind-scene-of-police-eye-in-the-sky-20170907/4019528.html>
- Interning in DC's Natural History Museum (8/18/2017)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/wia-summer-intern-dc-20170817/3990120.html>

The Story of the Presidential Resort: Camp David (8/10/2017)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/wia-camp-david-20170809/3979058.html>

Fashion Design to Meet the Needs of Physically Challenged (5/25/2017)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/fashion-for-disbaled-nyc-20170524/3869809.html>

History and Legend of the Watergate Hotel (3/29/2017)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/wia-watergate-hotel-20170328/3785243.html>

Shipping Containers Turn into Architecture (3/4/2017)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/wia-shipping-container-architecture-20170303/3749003.html>

A Visit to a CIA Safe House (1/5/2017)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/wia-cia-house-20170104/3663356.html>

Dogs Help PTSD Veterans (12/24/2016)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/wia-ptsd-dogs/3648644.html>

Exclusive Interview: Robert Bernstein, Former President of Random House, Chairman of Human Rights Watch (11/1/2016)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/bernstein-interview-20161031/3573571.html>

A Sanctuary for Blind Horses (9/20/2016)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/white-bird-horse-20160920/3515678.html>

Profile: Mr. Trash Wheel (7/26/2016)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/mr-trash-wheel-video-20160726/3447228.html>

Follow Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA) to the District (7/18/2016)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/judy-chu-profile-20160718/3422899.html>

A Mother's Memorial Day (5/29/2016)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/memorial-day-20160528/3350566.html>

Both Republican and Democratic Presidential Candidates Show Muscle to China: China has become a key issue in 2020 presidential elections (4/25/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/trump-biden-fight-over-who-is-weak-on-china-20200424/5390635.html>

Caucus Behind the Scenes: The process and the rules of caucus from onsite coverage (3/14/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/looking-behind-the-election-20200313/5328291.html>

Volunteers in Action in Elections: Grassroots canvassing and phone banking in Iowa (3/4/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/volunteers-canvassing-20200303/5313787.html>

Iowa Democratic Caucus's Last Mile: Democratic Party members are proud to be the minority in the State and hold strong to the tradition (1/31/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/madison-county-democrats-20200130/5267919.html>

Andrew Yang's Freedom Bonus Embraced by Trump Supporters: Grassroots supporters of Andrew Yang have high hope in Iowa caucus (1/13/2020)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bITRiC7wPVQ#action=share>

Andrew Young Attracts Young Voters: Young voters embrace Young's novel political ideas (11/15/2019)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/andrewyang-tiatian-va/5166580.html>

Two Idaho Women Running for Public Positions Share Their Dreams: Two women from different parties running for different positions in Idaho state government share insight in politics and life (10/16/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/women-in-idaho-midterm-elections/4615756.html>

Chinese Americans Participate in Sheriff Election – Chinese Americans campaign for a local sheriff candidate (7/21/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/sheriff-candidate-asian-americans-20180720/4491908.html>

Don Blankenship's Rise and Fall: Controversial West Virginia coal tycoon's journey in the primary (5/2/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/wv-candidate-20180521/4403684.html>

Exclusive Interview with American entrepreneur, lawyer and analyst Andrew Yang (3/31/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voa-interview-andrew-yang-20180330/4324747.html>

Exclusive Interview with American political historian Allen Lichtman (1/4/2017)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/interview-lichtman-20170103/3661622.html>

Sawyer County: Historic Presidential Predictor (8/6/2016)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/wia-sawyer-picking-us-president-20160802/3446011.html>

Shad Planking and the Election: a 68-year-old tradition in Virginia (April 25, 2016)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UpfC94dTOU>

Republican Party Primary in Washington, D.C. (3/14/2016)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/dc-election-20160314/3234635.html>

California Wineries Prepare for Tariff Increase in China (12/28/2019)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/5222544.html>

U.S. Garlic Producer Sees Big Business in Trade War (12/14/2019)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/three-generations-of-california-garlic-farmers-fight-against-chinese-dumping-winners-in-trade-war-20191213/5205108.html>

Washington State Farmers Applaud Government Support in U.S.-China Trade Tensions (9/26/2019)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/fruits-trade-war-washington-state/5098200.html>

Congressman Holds Picnic to Discuss U.S.-China Trade Tensions: Rep. Rick Larson (D-WA) talked about trade and U.S.-China relations in this VOA exclusive interview (8/31/2019)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/congressman-rick-larsen-trade-war-hong-kong-08292019/5062332.html>

When Kentucky Bourbon's "Golden Age" Meets the Trade War: Business worries tariffs will slow down the renaissance of the southern spirit (5/24/2019)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/Bourbon-tariff-20190523/4930207.html>

Three Generations of Iowan Farmers Reflect US-China Trade Relations: U.S. farmers explain China's unfair trade practices and the hope for the trade war to end them (10/26/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-farmers-trade-war-1-20191025/5140023.html>
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/5140577.html>

Idaho Dairy Producers Call for Fair Trade: Both calling for fair trade, Idaho dairy farmer supports trade war while industry group hope for a better solution (9/22/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/idaho-dairy-industry-trade-20180921/4582650.html>

New York Wineries Worry about Trade Tensions (8/17/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-china-tariffs-impact-ny-winery-20180816/4532481.html>

Pork Producers Anticipates Loss Due to Tariffs: Uncertainties about tariffs worry pork farmers as market fluctuation made losing money inevitable (6/9/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/iowa-hog-farmer-20180608/4430816.html>

An Asian Solution to Asian Carp Problem (5/22/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/carp-20180521/4403803.html>

Bike Sharing Business Brings Competition from China: Chinese bike-share company brings competition and a quest for change in Silicon Valley (12/6/2017)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/news-bikeshare-sv-20171205/4150232.html>

American Beef's Journey: from Nebraska to China (9/4/2017)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/beef-us-20170903/4013527.html>

Chinese Fuyao Glass Facing Union Organizers in Ohio: Chinese Fuyao Glass faces "cultural shock" after safety concerns and union challenges (8/17/2017)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/fuyao-community-intergration-20170815/3987110.html>

Interview with Fuyao Glass Chairman Cho Tak Wong: Chinese business tycoon on cultural integration in the United States and U.S.-China relations (7/30/2017)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/interview-fuyao-cao-dewang-20170729/3964769.html>

Spurned by Chinese Investors, City on Rust Belt Looks to Trump: Chinese investment brings hopes and disappointments to industrial city on the Rust Belt (11/8/2016)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/news-toledo-chinese-investment-20161107/3585194.html>

China's Aluminum Dumping Devastates Small Town on Rust Belt: Small town lost 2,000 jobs in aluminum plant bets on Trump to bring manufacturing jobs back (11/9/2016)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/west-virginia-20161108/3587490.html>

Deaf Community Solves Online Education Resource Shortage during COVID-19: Educators create and share online materials to ease lack of resources for deaf students (5/14/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/5419215.html>

Coffee House Adapts to Making Sanitizers amid COVID-19: Compass Coffee makes adjustment to provide care and safety to community (4/30/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/5397904.html>

Crowdsourcing App Helps Shoppers Find Essential Supplies during COVID-19: Phone App helps consumers and businesses by crowdsourcing information on inventory (4/17/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/5375206.html?withmediaplayer=1>

American Provides Free 3D Masks for First Responders during COVID-19: Jeremy Filco wanted to give back to medical staff and to hold the support together (3/25/2020)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNkFzffAq0Eq0E>

Dupont Increases Tyvek Production to Cope with COVID (3/12/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/DuPont-Increases-Protective-Garment-Production-to-Combat-Covid-19-20200312/5326009.html>

COVID Chinese Americans Series records one significant thing each interviewee did during the pandemic (2020)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xm3Q7b6CsCk&list=PL2CGrIfYxHqXH2BL5jccq1Tyh_sPfg1rM

COVID Chinese Americans: Art to Honor Frontline Workers (5/31/2020)

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/2-chinese-americans-use-art-honor-frontline-covid-fighters-4308251>

COVID Chinese Americans: A Nurse's Fight with COVID (5/7/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/chinese-american-nurse-covid19-20200506/5408936.html>

COVID Chinese Americans: Engineer Delivers Food (5/6/2020)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2A_XipqL0A&list=PL2CGrIfYxHqXH2BL5jccq1Tyh_sPfg1rM&index=6&t=0s

COVID Chinese Americans: The Inventor of N95 (4/24/2020)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFEFVv91WQ&list=PL2CGrIfYxHqXH2BL5jccq1Tyh_sPfg1rM&index=8

COVID Chinese Americans: A Good Samaritan (4/9/2020)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5EDUeZx0iA&list=PL2CGrIfYxHqXH2BL5jccq1Tyh_sPfg1rM&index=13

Uighur Americans Looking for Their Fathers (4/7/2020, 11/26/19)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/our-missing-father-maimaiti-abudula-20200407/5362277.html>

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/uyghur-american-profile-final20191125/5180691.html>

- Uighur Education Take Roots in America (11/15/2019)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/Uyghur-language-and-culture-education-takes-root-in-America-20191115/5165946.html>
- An Exhibition on Chinese Me Too Movement (10/9/2019)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/metoo-in-china-exhibition-ny/5116320.html>
- A Chinese-American Ceramic Artist Preserves Collective Memory (8/8/2019)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/new-york-ceramic-artist-brooklyn-20190807/5032921.html>
- A Profile: The Lion Dance Girl (2/14/2019)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/lion-dancer-nyc-20190213/4785821.html>
- StoryBook Series records Chinese Americans' culture shock moments living and studying in the U.S. (2018)
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2CGrfYxHqUbloT8zfgc-hen1zLi9arQ>
- StoryBook: The Mystery of the Easter Egg Hunt (8/29/2018)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZbiWt1maBQ&list=PL2CGrfYxHqUbloT8zfgc-hen1zLi9arQ&index=9&t=0s>
- The Guardian of Satellite Babies (6/30/2018)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kxi-6ON0mPg>
- Exhibition: Chinese Medicine in America (5/12/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/ny-chinese-medicine-20180512/4390222.html>
- American Photographers Document Chinese-American Life in the Mississippi Delta (4/13/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/photographers-on-chinese-in-south-mississippi-20180412/4344447.html>
- Exclusive Interview with Former Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao (12/2/2016)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/elaine-chao-sitdown-20160101/3619095.html>
- Online Language Proficiency Test Became Popular as China Shuts Down for COVID-19: As shutdowns of TOFLE and IELTS test centers, an online English test gains momentum (3/31/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/study-abroad-during-epidemic-on-the-battle-line-20200330/5351850.html>
- Chinese Students Stranded in U.S. amid COVID-19: Chinese students in the U.S. are facing hard choices due to uncertainties during the pandemic (3/23/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/Oversea-Chinese-Students-face-Pandemic-20200323/5341123.html>
- Where Do Chinese Students Go after Graduation from American Universities? American Companies (10/3/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/studies-in-usa-chinese-students-stay-or-leave/4575080.html>
- Chinese Students Pursue Religious Freedom when Studying in the U.S. (10/5/2018)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/studies-in-usa-chinese-students-stay-or-leave/4575080.html>

Three Generations of Chinese Students in the U.S. (10/3/2018)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/study-in-usa-three-generations-chinese-students-in-us-20181003/4533584.html>

U.S. Campus Series: Parsons School of Design (8/12/2017)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/video-20170812-parsons-school-profile/3986282.html>

U.S. Campus Series: CMU (8/5/2017)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/video-20170805-cmu-school-profile/3989878.html>

U.S. Campus Series: MIT (7/21/2017)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/video-20170718-mit-school-profile/3953435.html>

U.S. Campus Series: Boston University (7/8/2017)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/pkg-20170712-us-college-tour-boston-college/3941380.html>

VOA Indonesian tells the story of Robinson Sinurat, a son of a humble farmer from a remote area in Sumatera who dreamt big and worked hard to change his destiny and went on to become a Master's graduate of an Ivy League institution, Columbia University in New York City.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vv5moUSAxOw&t=109s>

<https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/kisah-perjuangan-robinson-sinurat-anak-petani-lulusan-s2-universitas-ternama-di-as/4734843.html> (web)

VOA Indonesians extensive coverage during the COVID-19 crisis reflects the impact of the pandemic on the lives of Indonesian diaspora communities in the United States as shown in the YouTube playlist (below), ranging from the fear and panic felt by many, to the sacrifices by Indonesian American health workers, to stories of hope and how people are coming together to help one another.

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUF5XSi_ZTuQDsQLnpH2hQqGvesORLgB0

Covering America, covering elections with a diaspora focus. English to Asia's *VOA Asia* interviewed and profiled the first Asian American presidential candidate Andrew Yang.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ABvBsANnBY>

Food Bites is a biweekly video series about food and food culture from different immigrant populations within the United States. With a focus on profiling immigrant chefs and restaurant owners, *Food Bites* gives Asian audiences an all-access behind-the-scenes tour of these interesting restaurants. English to Asia's episode, *Layered Flavors, Layered Memories*, highlights Cielo Rojo, a Mexican restaurant located just outside Washington, D.C.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRHfj8wqv5o>

English to Asia's *College View* series dives into many aspects of universities and colleges in the United States. Usually centered around one or two students, the series answers the many questions or mysteries a young student or parent outside the United States may have about studying in America.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lLdc6H53aA>

English to Asia speaks directly with interesting and inspiring Asian Americans, introducing them to its 1.7 million followers. The service's most viewed Facebook live interview focused on a war-time photographer who documented the Battle of Hue during the Vietnam War and opened a new exhibition of 20 of his large-scale prints at the Newseum.

<https://www.facebook.com/voasia>

Cambodian American Competes for Long Beach Council Seat (January 2020): In this video story, VOA Khmer looks at the campaign of Suely Saro, now the only Cambodian candidate running for one of the city council seats in Long Beach, the largest Cambodian community in the United States, to bring change and address local issues.

<https://khmer.voanews.com/a/5267463.html>

Cambodian-American NGO Showcases Khmer Culture in Minnesota (July 2019): This VOA Khmer video story follows Twin Cities-based IKARE and Khmer Legacy Museum that not only works to preserve Khmer culture among the Cambodian Diaspora there but also aims to raise awareness of Cambodian identity and culture among the wider American public.

<https://khmer.voanews.com/a/cambodian-american-organization-brings-in-artists-to-showcase-khmer-arts-in-us/4984919.html>

Cambodian-American Movie Brings Back Hope, Memories of Pre-Khmer Rouge Era (February 2019): This VOA Khmer multimedia story looked at *In the Life of Music*, an award-winning Cambodian-American movie featuring a classic song by Sinn Sisamouth that brings hope and reviving memories of the pre-Khmer Rouge era in Cambodia.

<https://www.voacambodia.com/a/cambodian-american-movie-brings-back-hope-memories-of-pre-khmer-rouge-era/4806269.html>

In the United States, traditional Khmer Dance Unites Cambodian-American Community (May 2019): For nearly 40 years, a Cambodian American couple has been preserving a unique traditional dance in the Washington, D.C. area in an effort to present what they regard as their native "invaluable asset" and bring together the Cambodian-American community in the United States.

<https://www.voacambodia.com/a/4898032.html>

For 'Khmerican' Adoptees and Their Families, Camp Reunion to Keep Bonds Strong (January 2018): Every summer for the past 15 years, Cambodian adoptees and their adoptive families from across the United States have gathered in the heart of Colorado's Rocky Mountains to attend Cambodian Heritage Camp.

<https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/khmerican-adoptees-and-their-families-camp-reunion-keep-bonds-strong>

Diverse Minorities in Massachusetts Mill Town Struggle for Representation (June 2017): This story looks at how activists in Lowell, Mass., the second-largest Cambodian community in the United States, were trying to change the city's at-large electoral system that they say discriminates against non-white candidates even as the city's population has become increasingly diverse. It was one of a series of reports that VOA Khmer did from 2016 to 2017 to explore how voter's rights and the electoral system in America affected the lives of Cambodian Americans.

<https://www.voacambodia.com/a/diverse-minorities-in-massachusetts-mill-town-struggle-for-representation/3916246.html>

U.S. Judge Issues Rarely Used Waiver for Cambodian Facing Deportation (March 2017): This story follows a Cambodian American who escaped deportation to Cambodia, a homeland he barely knew, and was thus able to keep together his multi-generational family. It is one of a series of enterprise reporting that VOA Khmer did throughout 2017 about Cambodian deportation, exploring how the community mobilized to the challenge the legal system of immigration in America.

<https://www.voacambodia.com/a/judge-issues-rarely-used-waiver-cambodian-facing-deportation/3770502.html>

As Americans Head to the Polls, Experts Warn of Damaged Interests Abroad (November 2016): As voters head to the polls in perhaps the most contentious U.S. election in recent history, experts warned that the low level of debate has damaged American interests in developing countries such as Cambodia. VOA Khmer looked at the issue from Long Beach, California, the largest Cambodian community in the U.S.

<https://www.voacambodia.com/a/as-americans-head-to-the-polls-experts-warn-of-damaged-interests-abroad/3586684.html>

From Student to Refugee to Immigrant and Citizen, a Cambodian American Tells His Story (September 2016): This story profiles the life and work of Cambodian American Tun Sovan, a community leader in the greater Washington, D.C. area, who arrived in the United States as a student more than 40 years ago. A classic American dream, as Cambodia plunged into wars, Tun Sovan stayed on as a refugee and went on to work for more than 35 years in federal and local governments while participating in a long list of civic groups promoting the Buddhist faith, religious dialogue and immigrant affairs.

<https://www.voanews.com/archive/student-refugee-immigrant-and-citizen-1-cambodian-american-tells-his-story>

Beyond Film, Angelina Jolie to Continue Empowering Cambodians (February 2017): American actress and director Angelina Jolie told VOA Khmer in an exclusive interview that the world premiere in Cambodia of the Netflix Khmer-language drama, *First They Killed My Father*, is her gift to the country of her adopted Cambodian American son Maddox. In front of many Cambodians invited to the outdoor, evening screening near Angkor Wat, Jolie said without Cambodia, "I would not be a mother."

<https://www.voacambodia.com/a/exclusive-beyond-film-jolie-looks-to-/3730687.html>

Creative Cambodia (December 2019): A documentary-style, in-depth video production that tells America's story of creativity, freedom and independent thinking. The program profiles creative Cambodian Americans and Cambodians who liberate themselves to create impacts in their respective fields. Each subject will have one in-depth interview video and one TV package produced and published in both Khmer and English. These videos will be put together on a Creative Cambodia special website to be designed in August 2020. Below are the top three:

- *Cambodian American Fighter-Artist Lives Strong Woman Ideal*: Sovannahry Em is a rising, [mixed martial arts competitor in Los Angeles](#) and also an accomplished artist.
- *Cambodian-American Composer Receives High Honor*: Dr. Chinary Ung is an internationally celebrated, [award-winning music composer](#) and professor of music at University of California San Diego.
- *Cambodian American Visual Effects Artist Brings Hollywood to Cambodia*: Sina San is an [Emmy-winning](#), computer-generated imagery or visual effects artist for Hollywood movies and TV shows. She drew for popular shows such as *Stranger Things*, *Westworld*, *Gotham*, *Mets*, and others.

VOA Korean's *Palisades Park People*, a 10-part documentary series, is about the lives of Korean Americans living in a small northern New Jersey borough, the biggest density of Korean population in the United States, aims to better inform North Korea's ruling elite, the service's primary audience group, about Americans from all walks of life. The Service has been gradually investing resources in

social media production, particularly YouTube, which increases the visibility of its programming on South Korean media, which helps the service enhance its capability to reach North Koreans.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUIU8Syk7Eo&list=PLyRktIDPb59J-cvXBm4k4TQ2MnRSc3tt2&index=1>

Interview with two daughters of Laotian who escaped persecution from Laos – one graduated with a Ph.D. from Harvard and another become a state senator in Ohio:

<https://lao.voanews.com/a/refugee-day/4966687.html>

Interview with Jessica Inthison, U.S. Figure Skating Championships, who will represent the United States in the Summer Olympics 2022 in China:

<https://lao.voanews.com/a/interview-isabelle-inthison-lao-american-figure-skating-prepares-for-winter-olympics-2022/5175138.html>

Lao Americans celebrate Thanksgiving Day in the United States:

<https://lao.voanews.com/a/members-of-lao-american-across-the-country-celebrate-thanksgiving/5183258.html>

The *Walking Monk* documentary by VOA Thai told the story of a Buddhist monk who walked across America to promote peace. Through his 3,000-mile journey, he was moved by a warm embrace of diversity as he made new American friends who were inspired by his mission. The story was nominated for Wilbur Awards and New York Festival Awards.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/buddhists-path-3970391>

In a story that helps explain entrepreneurship in America, a profile of Sarindr Bhumiratana, a Thai co-founder of *EpiBone* in New York City, illustrates his pioneering role in the science of bone implants that has paved the way for his lab work at Columbia University to become a closely watched start-up.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=235943274111761>

On the fifth anniversary of Thailand's 2014 military coup, virtually none of the local mainstream media treated the news as a front-page story, despite the fact that the coup had set the stage of Thailand's longest junta rule in nearly 50 years. VOA Thai filled that void, publishing a video story profiling Jom Petchpradap and Sunai Chulapongsathorn, who fled to the U.S. seeking political asylum after they disobeyed summon orders in the wake of the coup.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=444124513065394>

Vietnamese Refugee Thrives in Louisiana (November 2019).

<https://www.facebook.com/VOATiengViet/videos/587150615361330/?v=587150615361330>

Vietnamese millionaire succeeded by "turning trash into cash" (January 2020).

<https://www.facebook.com/VOATiengViet/posts/2274440335989970>

Story of jeeps in Little Saigon, California (March 2020).

<https://business.facebook.com/VOATiengViet/videos/2597646257180923/>

Life of a Vietnamese American in Louisiana (January 2020).

<https://business.facebook.com/VOATiengViet/videos/830228924112260/>

Vietnamese-born manufacturer transforms production lines to make PPE to donate to healthcare workers (Facebook livestream – May 2020).

<https://www.facebook.com/VOATiengViet/videos/678872142945341/?v=678872142945341>

From a refugee to a frontline hero - the story of a Vietnamese anesthesiologist fighting for COVID patients' life (Facebook livestream - May 2020).

<https://www.facebook.com/VOATiengViet/videos/2094430820702389/?v=2094430820702389>

COVID survivor in New York says he owes his life to incredible care from healthcare workers (Facebook livestream - May 2020)

<https://www.facebook.com/VOATiengViet/videos/226072795276404/?v=226072795276404>

"Sing for our heroes" Vietnamese-born artists raising funds to buy PPE for healthcare workers in the US (Facebook livestream - April 2020).

<https://www.facebook.com/VOATiengViet/videos/2708454789383480/>

California Wildfire: a Myanmar resident on how family evacuated the area (December 2017).

<https://burmese.voanews.com/a/california-wildfire-myanmar-residents/4157150.html>

President Trump's 100 Days (April 30 2017).

<https://burmese.voanews.com/a/president-celebrates-100th-day-at-rally-/3831684.html>

Eugene Cernan, U.S. Astronaut who last set foot on the moon passes away (17 Jan 2017).

<https://burmese.voanews.com/a/the-last-man-on-the-moon-eugene-cerner-passaway-/3679311.html>

VOA Tibetan's report, *Tibetans for Black Lives Campaign*, on June 4, 2020, focused on the need for Tibetans to be involved in such an effort in the first place with strong opinions from many ranging from social responsibility to Buddhist ethics and concern for the suffering of others.

<https://www.voatibetan.com/a/tibetans-for-black-lives-campaign-launched/5449735.html?fbclid=IwAR2qOSasoAuCDY-IWLt1r6fBhhT9WsuCumvizFkj0dNI-bpzPyYiOGgwMQM>

Many reacted to the VOA Tibetan report, some in support – [Tenzin Choetsang from Minnesota](#) – and [some against](#).

EURASIA DIVISION

Great American Road Trip – Over two seasons, VOA Russian's documentary project explores the character of different American states and cities through stories about their people, history, culture and food. The series of 24-minute episodes showcases the uniqueness of each place and aims to break down stereotypes about American society. VOA Russian journalists take viewers beyond major tourist routes and destinations and introduce them to people who best represent the American character – self-made problem-solvers, innovators, thinkers and role models. The documentary is being distributed via the Current Time Channel, social media, and video-sharing sites.

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/z/5562>

Great American Road Trip takes viewers above the Arctic Circle: Utqiagvik is the northernmost town in America, 300 miles north of the Arctic Circle. Tourists rarely visit this part of the world. Perched at the edge of the Arctic Ocean, at the point where the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas

meet, it's a community that depends on the ocean for its very survival. Utqiagvik has been home to indigenous Inuit people for at least the last 1,500 years. Viewers see how they live and how they apply traditional Inupiat living to modern challenges.

<https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/2062609830463315/>

Our American Story: Voices of Russians in America – From 2017 to 2020, VOA Russian produced 52 episodes – two seasons – of this documentary series, built around families of strong characters whose stories demonstrate the appeal of free-market capitalism and the role of citizens in a democracy, offering a counterpoint to everyday life in Russia. The first of the first 26-episode season featured Alex (Sasha) Shulchev D'Jamoos, who was born in 1992 in Tambov, Russia, but due to his malformed legs, his parents left him at the hospital. It generated a lively discussion, with viewers calling this episode amazing and powerful. They say Alex has an incredible personality and was able to flourish because he was given this chance in America.

www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/349356779292970/?v=349356779292970

VOA Russian's 10-part video series marking the 150th anniversary of the Alaska Purchase, when Russia sold Alaska to the United States. Launched in July 2017, the series provides an important insight into present-day life in Alaska – its economy, resources and people – and offers a counterpoint to false narratives in Kremlin-sponsored media that Alaska was abandoned by U.S. authorities and that life in the area would be better had Alaska remained part of Russia. Following are stories on the four-decade-old Alaska pipeline; the economy of Homer, a town that proudly calls itself the "world capital of halibut fishing;" and a group known as Russian Old Believers, living in a village of Nikolaevsk on Kenai Peninsula. The series features unique, original interviews and exquisite drone footage. Aired as part of the *Current Time America* TV program, the extended, 10-minute episodes were also digitally available via VOA Russian web and social media channels.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=10154646127367026>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=10154660782827026>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=10154657539037026>

VOA Russian series focusing on the life of Russian orphans who were adopted by American families in the 1990s. Launched around the fifth anniversary of the infamous Dima Yakovlev law (December 2017), which banned American adoptions of Russian orphans, the series features interviews with adopted children that VOA Russian filmed 15 years ago. They candidly speak about the challenges they had to overcome, their achievements and hopes. Each episode stirred lively discussion on digital platforms about the quality of life of Russian children adopted by Americans.

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/kids-adopted-from-russia/4179631.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=10154986921267026>

New York, New York – A weekly 30-minute magazine program by the VOA Russian team in the Big Apple. The fast-paced program showcases the heart and soul of New York, taking viewers out of the studio and onto the streets of the city that never sleeps. The show features New Yorkers and their way of life, and iconic New York spots, explaining their historic significance and the importance of the locales today. One of the most popular stories is about a homeless person who becomes a millionaire and helps others.

<https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/2522571861355649/>

https://www.instagram.com/p/B572cy7hh_D/?igshid=amkxrpodh5iq

During the pandemic, VOA Russian correspondents have been reporting stories for a segment called *Virus in New York*. The following story is about New York burying its dead:

<https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/239059113880379/?v=239059113880379>

A day with police: VOA Ukrainian followed teams of Ukrainian police on a visit to their American colleagues in Portland, Oregon. The Ukrainian police officers learned how to cooperate with civil society, maintain a corruption-free environment, and fight street mobs. VOA filmed the training in action and in the office environment, and interviewed participants of both delegations.

<https://youtu.be/DLoHowWvslA>

VOA Ukrainian visited the Ukrainian community in Ohio, including the Ukrainian Academy, the largest Ukrainian kindergarten in Ohio.

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/508804419730409/>

VOA Ukrainian profiled a Ukrainian family that recently acquired an ethnic food store near Washington, D.C, which is becoming the center of the local Ukrainian community. The store's owners and employees are convinced that Americans are developing a taste for Ukrainian food.

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/746512005758484/>

English for Everyone (Usim English), an Instagram project by VOA Ukrainian, is a creative way to explain American idioms to Ukrainian audiences. Fun, original illustrations along with engaging explanations vividly illustrate the idioms.

https://www.instagram.com/p/B34tcjwhKV2/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Albanian Americans in NYPD: From only 20 members 15 years ago, today the number of Albanian Americans in the New York Police Department force has increased to over 150. They have created their own association "Illyria." And for the first time ever, in 2019, the Albanian American Imam Tahir Kukaj was selected as NYPD Muslim Chaplain. Two stories:

<https://www.zeriamerikes.com/a/5153442.html>

<https://www.zeriamerikes.com/a/imami-shqiptar-kapelan-policia-nju-jork/5122107.html>

The American "journey" of a teenage Albanian: Klodian Gjonpalaj is hosted by an American family, under the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Abroad (YES) Program. High school students spend up to one year in the United States living with host families, attending high school, and learning about American society and values, and they educate Americans about their countries and values. The Albanian Service visited the Filios family that is hosting Klodian.

<https://www.zeriamerikes.com/a/5222602.html>

Albanians honor President Wilson: A delegation from Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia went to Staunton, Woodrow Wilson's birthplace to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Paris Peace Conference. Albanians consider President Wilson as the savior of their nation. Staunton Mayor Carolyn Dull told VOA Albanian, "Sometimes we may forget what a powerful personality he was and how many great things he accomplished. He was a human being, and had his share of mistakes. We are not saying he was perfect. But the fact that he managed to save Albania as a state and possibly to guarantee the existence of its people, this is wonderful and makes us proud of him."

<https://www.zeriamerikes.com/a/n%C3%AB-stenton-vendlindja-e-presidentit-wilson/5249746.html>

Albanians Saving Jews: VOA Albanian covered a documentary film about a Jewish rescue in Albania during World War Two. A story told by Jewish survivors of the Holocaust who speak about the nobility of the Albanian people who put their own lives in danger in order to save those of their visitors. The documentary was screened at the U.S. Holocaust Museum (April 2011, Washington), Yad Vashem Museum (May 2012, Jerusalem) and at other locations. According to Yad Vashem,

"Albania, the only European country with a Muslim majority, succeeded in the place where other European nations failed. Almost all Jews living within Albanian borders during the German occupation, those of Albanian origin and refugees alike, were saved, except members of a single family. Impressively, there were more Jews in Albania at the end of the war than beforehand."
<https://www.zeriamerikes.com/a/5305514.html>

Mother Theresa monument in New Jersey: The Albanian Alliance of New Jersey in cooperation with the city of Garfield inaugurated on November the Mother Teresa Park. The event coincided with the 107th anniversary of Albania's Independence Day. Mother Theresa is of Albanian descent. (November 2019)
<https://www.zeriamerikes.com/a/garfield-p%C3%ABrurrohet-parku-n%C3%ABn%C3%AB-tereza/5187662.html>

VOA Armenian's *Thank you America* story related the American Armenian community's donation of millions of meals to Feeding America as a thank you for recognizing the Armenian Genocide by both chambers of U.S. Congress in December 2019.
 LINK: <https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/5377630.html>

Working on President Trump's transition team: VOA Armenian talked to the Nahigian brothers, Armenian Americans from Ohio who worked on President Trump's transition team.
 LINK: <https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/4173506.html>

In a VOA Armenian interview with then-Uber Vice President Raffi Krikoryan, the major topic of the discussion was the near future where self-driving cars will dominate the roads.
 LINK: <https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/3728879.html>

Renowned American economist Daron Acemoglu discussed perspectives of Armenia's development after the "Velvet Revolution" of 2018 with VOA Armenian:
 LINK: <https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/4433699.html>

Former White House photographer Scout Tufankjian told VOA's Armenian Service the most impressive moments of her work as President Obama's White House photographer.
 LINK: <https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/3728888.html>

Famous musician, System of a Down band member Serj Tankian, spoke to VOA Armenian about his recent songs dedicated to the democratic changes in Armenia.
 LINK: <https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/4691100.html>

VOA Bosnian's Facebook live report on anti-racism protests in the United States:
<https://www.facebook.com/studiowashington/videos/249602272967644/>

Young Bosnian immigrant Harun Mehmedinovic of Los Angeles lives his American dream as he works with acclaimed U.S. actor Leonardo Di Caprio.
<https://ba.voanews.com/a/ice-on-fire-dokumentarac-leonarda-dicapria-prikazan-u-washingtonu/5147437.html>

Bosnian American woman is among top realtors in the state of Virginia, saying she owes everything to how America treats its women.
<https://ba.voanews.com/a/amina-basis-jedna-od-najboljih-agentica-za-nekretnine-u-virdziniji/4825234.html>

VOA Bosnian report on the opioid crisis in America and how Americans are fighting to overcome it:

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/4153078.html>

Bosnian Service subtitled video report on fighting corruption in the United States vs. in Bosnia:

<https://business.facebook.com/studiowashington/videos/490749854958465/>

Bosnian American NBA players talk about their success in the United States.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/mario-hezonja-i-usuf-nurkic-i-ja-smo-blizi-nego-braca/5237558.html>

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/mario-hezonja-play-off-sa-portlandom-i-olimpijada-sa-hrvatskom/5237574.html>

VOA Bosnian looks at how three Muslim American women became members of Congress.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/muslimanke-po-prvi-put-osvojile-mandate-u-kongresu-sad/4648097.html>

The Bosnian Service asks is it time for the United States to elect a woman president?

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/da-li-je-vrijeme-da-sad-dobiju-predsjednicu-/5173521.html>

VOA Bosnian reports on history of women in the U.S. military.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/historija-%C5%BEena-u-americkoj-vojnoj-sluzbi/5162259.html>

VOA Bosnian reports live on the impeachment process in Congress.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/opoziv-cinjenice-i-procedure-o-sudjenju-americkom-predsjedniku-pred-senatom/5256895.html>

Bosnian Service report features exclusive interview with renowned American singer-songwriter BB King, and the story about his music.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/2770784.html>

Bosnian and American musicians tour America together.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/diplomci-prestiznog-muzickog-koledza-kao-dio-muzickog-braka-sevdaha-i-jazz-a/5029056.html>

Bosnian businesswoman is mentored by a group of American women leaders.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/i-jedna-%C5%BEena-iz-bih-pod-mentorstvom-vrhunskih-poslovnih-ameri%C4%8Dkih-%C5%BEena/4861462.html>

Bosnian Service interviews Tom Gjelten, author of best-seller *A Nation of Nations: America grew and developed on migrants, not ethnicity*:

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/gjeltten-immigration-09-16-2015/2966601.html>

U.S. Couple weds in a Georgian church in the United States:

<https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/american-weddint-at-georgian-monastery/4403675.html>

U.S. Marine Corps Marathon, the "Peoples Marathon," welcomes wounded soldiers from Georgia:

<https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/us-marine-marathon/4089195.html>

VOA Georgian reports on NASA's exhibition commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Voyager 1 flight to the solar system.

<https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/nasa-voyager-chakrulo/4029385.html>

VOA Macedonian told the story of the President's Guest House, commonly known as Blair House, which has played a significant role in the history of American diplomacy. The Service visited the unique place and learned more about whom it has hosted and what events it has witnessed since it was built in 1824.

<https://mk.voanews.com/a/4830852.html>

<https://projects.voanews.com/newsletter-archive/day-2019-03-25/>

VOA Macedonian live report from Los Angeles on the Oscars 2020, featuring an interview with the crew of the Macedonian film *Honeyland*, a contender for the first time in the country's history in two major categories – best documentary and best foreign movie:

<https://mk.voanews.com/a/voa-macedonian-oscars-2020-parasite-best-movie-in-hollywood/5281272.html>

VOA Macedonian shows the American dream in its essence – an exclusive interview with Vlatko Andonovski, coach of the U.S. Women's Soccer Team. VOA Macedonian was the first media outlet to interview Andonovski, who is of Macedonian descent, shortly after his selection.

<https://mk.voanews.com/a/voa-glas-na-amerika-intervju-vlatko-andonovski/5214052.html>

<https://mk.voanews.com/a/5214047.html> (video)

VOA Macedonian interviewed immigration lawyer Michael Wilds, whose father defended the legendary case of John Lennon, after President Richard Nixon decided to deport him. Wilds was the lawyer for first lady Melania Trump in her immigration case.

<https://mk.voanews.com/a/daca-john-lennon-donald-trump-/4118332.html>

Interview with Serbian American cardiologist Sasa Vukelic, who lives and works in New York City, on his experiences during the Coronavirus pandemic:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/srpski-kardiolog-iz-njujorka-u-vreme-epidemije-tesko-naci-balans-izmedju-ljudskih-sloboda-i-kolektivnog-dobra-/5368088.html>

Interview with Serbian American specialist for lung diseases, Igor Barjaktarevic, who works at the UCLA hospital in Los Angeles, California, on his work and experiences during the coronavirus pandemic:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/srpski-pulmolog-iz-kalifornije-virus-nepredvidiv-dru%C5%A1tvena-izolacija-gorka-pilula-koja-se-mora-popiti/5359237.html>

Report on how several Serbian American professional musicians living in the United States are coping with the stay-at-home situation during the coronavirus pandemic:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/neizvesnost-prati-umetnike-za-vreme-epidemije-koronavirusa/5412111.html>

Report on a performance by a group of Serbian American musicians at Washington's Kennedy Center:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/srbija-%C5%A1irom-klavirskog-sveta-u-kenedi-centru/4804787.html>

Serbian Service report on how a program teaching children inter-racial tolerance is implemented at an elementary school in Rockville, Maryland:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/kako-se-u-americkim-skolama-uci-tolerancija/4539770.html>

Two more Montenegrins graduate from U.S. military academies – Nikola Pejovic from the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, and Nevena Nikolic from West Point Academy in New York, the first woman from Montenegro to do so.

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/cg-dobila-jo%C5%A1-dvoje-obicira-sa-ameri%C4%8Dkih-vojnih-akademija/4934357.html>

Report on Serbian American engineers and IT professionals living in California's Bay area, their careers and successes:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/kako-da-uspete-u-san-francisku-ako-dolazite-iz-srbije/5244923.html>

Serbian Service report on Montenegrin American jazz pianist Larry Vuckovic:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/pijanista-lari-vu%C4%8Dkovi%C4%87-legenda-d%C5%BEez-scene-zapadne-obale/5233937.html>

VOA Serbian report on Voodoo tradition in New Orleans and interview with a Voodoo Queen:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/%C5%A1ta-je-vudu--magija-ili-religija-/4954425.html>

Serbian Service interview with Frank Newport, then-editor-in-chief at Gallup Organization on Americans' attitudes toward government and elections:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/njuport-potrebni-su-nam-bolji-kandidati-za-kongres-iz-izvr%C5%A1nu-vlast/4427629.html>

Serbian Service interview with Frank Newport, then-editor-in-chief at Gallup Organization on political divisions in U.S. society:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/intervju/4030886.html>

Report on "Black Serbs," a multi-racial, multi-ethnic hip-hop band based in Chicago, Illinois:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/kako-afroameri%C4%8Dki-bend-u%C4%8Di-srpski-/4940785.html>

Interview with Serbian American woman, a city bus driver in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, who saved a lost toddler:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/zivot-kako-je-irena-ivi%C4%87-iz-prokuplja-postala-heroj-dana-u-americi/4739983.html>

Serbian Service report on local George Floyd protest in Bethesda, Maryland:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/protesti-betezda-dzordz-floyd/5447090.html>

Serbian Service report on reopening of small businesses in suburban Washington that were closed due to the coronavirus pandemic:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/betezda-merilend-ekonomija-otvaranje/5430589.html>

VOA Serbian report on residents of suburban Washington performing for their neighbors to lift spirits during the coronavirus pandemic:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/merilend-betezda-ples-komsije-/5344305.html>

Serbian Service report on father and son Vlasto and Nebojsa Dubak, immigrants from Montenegro, owners of Chicago-based "Dubak Electric Group," and innovators who successfully patented their thermal camera for use during the coronavirus pandemic:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/otac-i-sin-dubak-na%C5%A1a-termalna-kamera---da-nova-normala-bude-kao-stara-normala-/5415332.html>

Report on SAMA, Association of Serbian American physicians, who organize charity work and fundraising to help local hospitals in the Balkans:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/aksentijevic-sama-skupila-75-hiljada-u-humanitarne-svrhe-u-2019/5311671.html>

LATIN AMERICA DIVISION

Latino Vote Turnout in 2020 Elections: A record number of 32 million Latinos can vote in the United States presidential election in 2020. The increase, of more than 15 percent compared to 2016, makes Hispanics the most important ethnic or racial minority in the electoral contest, above African Americans.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/estadosunidos/eeuu-elecciones-votantes-latinos-cuantos-donde-como>

Young Hispanics: A look at the role of young Hispanics in the 2020 elections: The relevance of the Hispanic vote in the 2020 elections is not underestimated by parties and organizations in the United States.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/archivo/hispanos-grupo-de-interes-iowa>

How does the Iowa Caucus work? Iowa is the first state to decide who voters want as nominees for both parties, and they do so through "caucuses" or partisan assemblies. What are they and how do they work?

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/caucus-iowa-asambleas-partidarias-elecciones-2020-183020>

Super Tuesday – a tour of various states to learn about the impact of voting on various communities.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/el-mundo-al-dia-192479>

The United States open for business: A look at different areas of the United States and how they are preparing to return to economic activity.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/el-mundo-al-dia-204861>

Fear of socialism guides Venezuelan family vote in the United States: A family that lived socialism in Venezuela explain their fears about the presence of that ideology in the United States.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/estadosunidos/eeuu-miedo-socialismo-guia-voto-familia-venezolana>

How does impeachment work and how long does it take? What is impeachment, what role do the House and Senate play, and what are the variables regarding its duration?

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/juicio-politico-donald-trump-tiempos-senado-cuando-durara-183165>

Small Community in Louisiana stands in solidarity with family of arrested Venezuelan American Executive of CITGO Company.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episodio/caso-seis-de-citgo-conmueve-comunidad-en-eeuu-tomeu-vadell-183788>

Latinos vote in the Florida primary elections and explain the importance of voting despite fears of the pandemic. The Election Department took extreme precautions to reduce voter concerns about the possible spread of the pandemic. Many Latinos surveyed by VOA value their role in the elections.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/elections2020/primarias-florida-votar-coronavirus>

VOA at rallies in Virginia where gun activists react to Democrats' plan about passing gun control legislation. Virginia has been at the center of the national arms debate:

<https://www.voanoticias.com/estadosunidos/activistas-derechos-de-las-armas-se-reuniran-lunes-en-virginia-eeuu>

How are laws passed in the United States?

<https://www.voanoticias.com/archivo/cuales-son-los-pasos-y-como-se-aprueban-las-leyes-en-eeuu>

Explainer: What will the party conventions be like this year?

<https://www.voanoticias.com/elections2020/como-seran-las-convenciones-de-los-partidos-en-2020>

Explainer: What measures is the U.S. Congress evaluating on gun control?

<https://www.voanoticias.com/estadosunidos/proyectos-de-ley-baraja-el-congreso-eeuu-sobre-control-de-armas>

Protests defy curfew in U.S. cities. VOA journalists report from the main cities where the demonstrations take place:

<https://www.voanoticias.com/estadosunidos/continuan-las-protestas-estados-unidos-por-la-muerte-de-george-floyd>

Doctors in the United States are honored in their neighborhoods for their work during the pandemic: A Hero lives here.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/estadosunidos/un-heroe-vive-aqui-medico-hispano-de-chicago-recibe-una-agradable-sorpresa>

Explainer: Why are there protests in the U.S. against coronavirus measures? In many areas of the United States, people have rallied to pressure the federal government and state governments to lift the restrictions imposed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/estadosunidos/por-que-hay-protestas-en-eeuu-contra-medidas-por-coronavirus>

The pandemic changed the way festivals and cultural events are held. An example was the Hola México festival in Los Angeles.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/entretenimiento/hola-mexico-teatro-virtual>

Due to the coronavirus, cinemas, theaters and concert halls closed their doors as part of the measures to prevent contagion. Entrepreneurs in the entertainment industry seek to experiment to survive:

<https://www.voanoticias.com/entretenimiento/futuro-salas-cine-teatro-tras-pandemia>

Latinos in Los Angeles are among those most affected by coronavirus. Latinos represent 50 percent of Los Angeles' population.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/estadosunidos/latinos-en-los-angeles-entre-los-mas-afectados-por-coronavirus>

VOA spoke with Franklin Chang Díaz, a former NASA astronaut and visionary who plans to break the borders between Earth and space as a measure to preserve life for the future.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/tecnologia-ciencia/tenemos-que-convertirnos-en-una-especie-multiplanetaria-afirma-astronauta>

NASA is testing in its JPL laboratory in Pasadena, California, its new Rover or Astromobile that it will send to Mars on a special mission. VOA spoke with Diana Trujillo, aerospace engineer and leader of the robotic hand of the instruments of the Mars Rover 2020. Diana Trujillo was born in Colombia.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/tecnologia-ciencia/ingeniera-aeroespacial-colombiana-parte-de-mision-marte-2020>

Coverage of the Haitian American Community in the United States included a focus on Haitian Americans in Utah. An on-camera interview with then-Congresswoman Mia Love (R-UT) centered on her view about her campaign, as well as the electoral process.

<https://www.voanouvel.com/a/4648477.html>

Haitian Americans talk about their community in Utah.

<https://www.voanouvel.com/a/utah/4652347.html>

<https://www.voanouvel.com/a/4646746.html>

Weekly radio segment on governance and the justice system: As part of VOA Creole reporting on America, in this example, the service interviewed former assistant state attorney in Miami on the U.S. justice system. The interviewee explained the process of filing charges against a suspect and mentioned that in the United States a suspect is considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

<https://www.voanouvel.com/a/5450977.html>

PERSIAN DIVISION

Max Amini Achievers – Highlighting success stories of Iranian Americans: Profile of Firouz Michael Naderi, an Iranian American scientist who spent 36 years in various technical and executive positions at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory:

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/dstawrd-261401>

Young people creating new technologies in U.S. labs:

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/tech-204830>

World AIDS Day: How AIDS became a treatable disease:

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/aids-236147>

New U.S. Citizens: Benefits and Responsibilities:

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-citizen-228238>

30 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall:

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/germany-218625>

Valentine's Day in the United States:

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/val-day-253076>

SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA DIVISION

Gun violence in Sutherland Springs, Texas, where [26 churchgoers](#) were killed.

From Camel Jockey to Humphrey Fellow – America provides opportunity to a former camel jockey – a success story:

<https://www.voanews.com/student-union/camel-driver-law-student-one-mans-amazing-journey>

Islam Thrives in a former Catholic Church (Syracuse, New York):

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/islam-thrives-former-us-church-3767671>

U.S. coal country faces hard times:

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/coal-giving-way-greener-energy-us>

Andy Shalal, founder and owner of Bus Boys & Poets – a story about America providing a thriving place for refugees and migrants fleeing war and terror around the world:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=659035734861250>

First Islamic Graduate School in the United States (Claremont, California):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2geFx1k9CPQ&feature=youtu.be>

Rapunzel Tower on Victoria Beach (Laguna Beach, California):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QK3xzG1wn5U&feature=youtu.be>

Coming to America: How Refugees Tackle Communicating in English:

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/coming-america-how-refugees-tackle-english-3749081>

Meditation Helps Baltimore School Students (story originally done in Urdu, 2017):

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/meditation-helps-baltimore-schoolchildren-one-breath-time-3743296>

Women Motorcycle Riders Tear Up the Road (story originally done in Urdu, 2016):

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/woman-motorcycle-riders-tear-road-3721051>

Comprehensive coverage of the Consumer Electronic Show (CES), one of the [biggest tech shows](#) in the world.

<https://www.darivoo.com/a/5249578.html>

Noor Alexandria Abukaram, a 16-year-old American runner who was disqualified from a race for wearing a hijab:

<https://www.pashtova.com/a/noor-alexandria-abukaram-/5184881.html>

Life of Afghan Muslims in Las Vegas:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1272083049645951>

Afghan mother graduates from U.S. college alongside daughters:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2278735062379270>

Big Apple [Music Awards](#) in New York:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1268336546545713>

Documentary film *Brother* on Afghan translator saving American soldier's life from the Taliban:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=340572943354059>

Disabled Afghan and American soldiers lifestyle after war:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1731011683611528>

U.S. educational exchange program:

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=493960117813552&ref=watch_permalink

First Uzbek-American police in New York:

<https://www.amerikaovozi.com/a/uzbek-immigrant-joins-nypd/4501053.html>

Uzbek Students in the United States:

<https://www.amerikaovozi.com/a/uzbek-high-school-girl/5009898.html>

Uzbek Family in Tennessee:

<https://www.amerikaovozi.com/a/4905261.html>

Uzbeks Americans in the United States – Three generations:

<https://www.amerikaovozi.com/a/uzbeks-usa/4701557.html>

LEARNING ENGLISH

America's National Parks: When the National Park Service, established to "protect the wild and wonderful landscapes" in the United States celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2016, Learning English produced a weekly program for the internet and radio broadcast to highlight the distinctive parks and historical sites throughout the country.

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/p/5849.html>

The Making of the Constitution: The Constitution of the United States established the structure of the government and the laws that govern the nation. Learning English used text, audio, graphics and video to explain the making of the Constitution. The program explains the background, the delegates, the issues, the Bills of Rights and the Amendments. English learners can also take the quizzes to test their comprehension.

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/p/5613.html>

America's Presidents: The series profiles all 45 presidents of the United States telling their lives, their stories, how they governed, and why Americans remember them. The series is available for the internet, radio and TV broadcasts.

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/p/6766.html>

DISINFORMATION

VOA's fact-based, balanced and objective reporting offers an alternative to government-controlled media that manipulate reporting and spread disinformation to demonize the Western world, instigate resentment toward the United States and advance their policy objectives, often publishing false and misleading information in an effort to discredit the United States and the West. A well-known and influential brand around the world, millions of people turn to VOA as a reliable and trusted news source that provides accurate, authoritative and comprehensive news and information that the politicized domestic media in many target countries are unable to deliver.

NEWS CENTER**Polygraph:**

Since its inception in 2017, Polygraph.info has grown to become an internationally respected fact-check site and a voice of authority on matters involving Russia and Eastern European countries. Multiple news outlets and fact-checking sites in the region routinely republish Polygraph.info fact-checks or cite them, as have Washington think-tanks and some members of Congress. Currently Polygraph.info is expanding its geographic domain beyond Eastern Europe to audiences in Latin America, Arab countries and China.

<https://www.polygraph.info/p/5981.html>

Some of the reports about disinformation:

Russian TV Accuses Kyiv of Forsaking Ukrainians in Wuhan; Evacuee Tells Different Story
<https://www.polygraph.info/a/russia-attacks-ukraine-for-delay-in-wuhan-coronavirus-evacuation/30446037.html>

RT Falsely Claims U.S. Uses SWIFT as Weapon
<https://www.polygraph.info/a/rt-falsely-claims-us-uses-swift-as-weapon-fact-check/30046100.html>

Chinese Disinformation Hits U.S. Biolab With New COVID-19 Conspiracy
<https://www.polygraph.info/a/china-disinfo-covid-19/30647619.html>

China Misleads on Hong Kong Support for New Security Law
<https://www.polygraph.info/a/china-hong-kong-law-fact-check/30642302.html>

Is This Photo of Kim Jong Un's Funeral Real? No!
<https://www.polygraph.info/a/fact-check-nokor-kim-dead-pics/30583800.html>

Russia Seasons Escalating Trump-Iran Tensions With Disinformation:
<https://www.polygraph.info/a/fact-check-iran-russia-trump/30574959.html>

Iran's Immunity from the Coronavirus? Kiss a Holy Tomb
<https://www.polygraph.info/a/iran-coronavirus-fact-check/30477840.html>

The Bezos Phone Hack and the Saudis' Misleading Rebuttal
<https://www.polygraph.info/a/saudi-hacking-bezos-fact-check/30395801.html>

Disputing Turkey, Russian Ambassador Dodges Blame Over Deadly Airstrikes in Northwest Syria
<https://www.polygraph.info/a/russia-turkey-syria-fact-check/30443943.html>

Close Call: Russian Navy Ship vs. U.S. Destroyer

<https://www.polygraph.info/a/close-call-russian-navy-ship-vs-u-s-navy-destroyer/30383329.html>

It's Not "Scientifically Impossible" to Shoot Down a Passenger Jet

<https://www.polygraph.info/a/iran-ps752-missile-fact-check/30371408.html>

Evidence Undercuts China's Denial of Racism Against Africans:

<https://www.polygraph.info/a/30559882.html>

Hezbollah Leader Claims Group Is Not Active in Germany. Really?

<https://www.polygraph.info/a/30597543.html>

Iranian Media Spreads 9/11 Conspiracy Theories on Eve of Attacks

<https://www.polygraph.info/a/iranian-media-spreads-9-11-conspiracy-theories-anniversary-fact-check/30159302.html?nocache=1>

Are 'Putin's Billions' a Myth?

<https://www.polygraph.info/a/putin-wealth-aslund-propaganda-fact-check/29940697.html?nocache=1>

China Seeks to Rebrand Internment Camps as "Vocational Education and Training" Centers

<https://www.polygraph.info/a/china-xinjiang-internment-camp-propaganda-fact-check-/29553362.html?nocache=1>

Georgia's "Secret Lab" – Experiments on Humans or Normal Treatment of Hepatitis C?

<https://www.polygraph.info/a/fact-check-georgia-lugar-lab-russia/29507458.html?nocache=1>

The Kremlin, "Satan" and the State of Florida

<https://www.polygraph.info/a/putin-new-missile-nuclear-florida-us/29081265.html?nocache=1>

AFRICA DIVISION

The women's show *Our Voices* devoted an episode to the spread of fake news during the coronavirus crisis.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/voa-our-voices-226-covid-19-how-africa-fighting-fake-news-4298591>

An English to Africa report debunked the "miracle cure" for COVID-19 from Madagascar.

<https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/no-miracle-cure-coronavirus-until-clinical-trials-prove-madagascars-herbal> (English)
<https://www.voaswahili.com/a/maisha-na-afya-episode-18/5424468.html> (Swahili)

Zia i tene is a 30-minute radio program in the Sango language to the Central Africa Republic that the target audiences count on to counter Russian disinformation in the country.

<https://www.voaafrigue.com/Sango>

The military in Mali secures an area after a local official tells VOA he is worried about a possible militant attack.

<https://www.voabambara.com/a/5298757.html>

An al-Shabab defector tells VOA Somali the extremist group is lying to the Muslims and the world about implementing Sharia.

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/senior-al-shabab-foreign-fighter-defects-somalia>

VOA English, Lingala, and Central News correspondents joined in reporting on violence, misinformation, and funding shortages opening avenues for Ebola's spread beyond Eastern Congo. In Butembo, VOA found leaflets from the Mai-Mai militia warning security forces and the general public against supporting Ebola health workers or treatment centers.

<https://www.voanews.com/science-health/ebola-outbreak-could-spiral-beyond-drc-who-warns>

VOA produced groundbreaking reports and a documentary exposing the brutality of Nigeria's Boko Haram terror group with exclusive Boko Haram internal videos.

<https://projects.voanews.com/boko-haram-journey-from-evil/>

VOA reporters were the first to reach the mayor of the Nigerian village outside of which four U.S. Green Berets were killed in an ambush. "The attackers, the bandits, the terrorists have never lacked accomplices among local populations," Mayor Almou Hassane told VOA French. VOA's original reporting that villagers delayed the troops, while terrorists laid their ambush, was picked up by major U.S. media outlets.

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/new-details-emerge-about-attack-killed-us-soldiers-niger>

The former Boko Haram fighter Bana Umar says international radio helped convince him to escape from the terrorist group. "I listened to these radio stations frequently to the extent that when I laid down to sleep I would be thinking of what I heard. I realized that all our activities were evil," he told VOA Hausa.

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/confessions-boko-haram-defector>

VOA Hausa's reporting helped a Nigerian family get compensation for a home lost to government construction and corruption in the local government.

<https://www.voahausa.com/a/ibrahim-alfa-ahmed-ciki-da-gaskiya-afirilu-24-2017/3823051.html>

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC DIVISION

Rights organization report found China's Xi is responsible for COVID-19 pandemic (6/4/20)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzrqz80jjU0>

31 Years since Tiananmen, China is slated to be top enemy of press freedom (6/3/20)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5A4NXb0kufc>

Is China using the U.S. protests to advance its propaganda? (6/2/20)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ielG6Cmdq4c&t=3s>

Why is YouTube censoring anti-CCP phrases? (5/29/20)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fK01vjL0akA&list=PL2CGrIfyxHqWP3o6Yd7ResKZdPVkMkGM&index=3>

China disinformation campaign on pandemic targets overseas Chinese (05/28/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/ray-upg-pkg-9-coronavirus-china-disinformation-trt0426-tc-etc/5438948.html>

From pandemic reaction to Hong Kong, what's behind China's provocative moves? (5/26/20)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgI04UX55w&list=PL2CGrIfYxHqWUubZDnNEATTp1fpJdkD5wr&index=19>

Harvard professor cited by Chinese propaganda: No doubt coronavirus originated from Wuhan (5/22/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/covid-origin-china-disinformation/5431339.html>

Xi's "comprehensive review" of COVID-19 does not mean investigation of the virus origin (5/19/20)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDtXz6dRV10&list=PL2CGrIfYxHqWUubZDnNEATTp1fpJdkD5wr&index=32>

Democracies cannot and should not win the "race to the bottom" in media war against Authoritarian China? (5/13/20)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZ_4sRkKANQ&list=PL2CGrIfYxHqWP3o6Yd7ResKZdPVkMKGm&index=7

Ousting revered foreign reporters, China on the course of self-punishment? (5/11/20)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16dh05bjM28&list=PL2CGrIfYxHqWP3o6Yd7ResKZdPVkMKGm&index=8>

State Department: Zombie Twitter accounts boost Chinese propaganda on coronavirus (5/9/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-identifies-china-twitter-bots/5412719.html>

Taiwan official showcasing Taiwan Model on containing COVID-19 said transparency is key to counter disinformation (5/09/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/deputy-hhs-secretary-and-taiwan-vice-premier-discuss-pandemic-says-us-robust-supports-taiwan-inclusion-in-whas-mid-may-meeting-20200508/5412319.html>

Chinese State Media Push Conspiracy Theory that Coronavirus Escaped from Maryland Military Base (5/8/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/fort-detrick-conspiracy-05082020/5411497.html>

China launches new wave of propaganda amid the pandemic (5/7/20)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PwuceL85Hk&list=PL2CGrIfYxHqWUubZDnNEATTp1fpJdkD5wr&index=51>

Perry Link on Pottinger speech: See through CCP's lies, speak to Chinese people's hearts (5/6/20)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=giu5WuM1Gyc&t=6s>

Trump stands by Wuhan lab origin theory, what did the U.S. intelligence find? (5/5/20)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CpOCjPbkfI&list=PL2CGrIfYxHqWUubZDnNEATTp1fpJdkD5wr&index=53>

CCP Media Slams Pompeo as the "Enemy of the State" (5/4/20)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSaFFmxaDRA&list=PL2CGrIfYxHqXHU9EZ3ghyLFTUcaYJa3Id&index=12>

All the discussions behind WashPo's Pottinger profile: from China policy to information warfare (5/4/20)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=foTILBXbyiA&list=PL2CGrIfyxHqWP3o6Yd7ResKZdPVktmKG M&index=10>

U.S. official said U.S. and Taiwan have long been targets of China's disinformation campaign, Taiwan's democratic model on COVID-19 is example for the world to follow (5/1/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-official-said-if-taiwan-model-followed-in-pandemic-the-world-would-be-in-better-position-20200430/5399894.html>

China's "wolf warrior" officials mark the end of China's diplomacy? (4/30/20)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DJDGHuliTU&list=PL2CGrIfyxHqWUubZDnNEATTp1fpjdkD5wr&index=65>

China's information war against the U.S. and how will the pandemic change the world order? (4/30/20)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cfYlsl8JJA&list=PL2CGrIfyxHqWUubZDnNEATTp1fpjdkD5wr&index=66>

Cruz: Pentagon must stop working with Hollywood studios that work with Chinese censored (4/30/20)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/ted-cruz-china-censorship-hollywood/5398568.html>

As coronavirus dwindles in China, China is promoting its model, trying to weaken the liberal order (04/29/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/china-model-coronavirus-20200428/5395958.html>

U.S.-Taiwan Health Ministers discuss ways to cooperate in fighting COVID-19 (4/28/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-hhs-secretary-azar-discusses-covid19-with-taiwan-health-minister-in-phone-conference-20200427/5394590.html>

Like the Russians, China has waged disinformation campaigns within the United States (4/24/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/china-disinformation-campaign-us-04232020/5389014.html>

Why should China be held accountable for Coronavirus? (4/23/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/china-coronavirus-accountability-04212020/5384299.html>

China revised Wuhan death toll and the world still does not buy it (4/21/20)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnTuk_HOMAs&list=PL2CGrIfyxHqWUubZDnNEATTp1fpjdkD5wr&index=89

Claudia Rosett: China influence growing, defunding WHO is the right thing (4/17/20)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbxj9flwkpA>

Asking the world to be grateful to China for its aid and sacrifices in fighting the epidemic, Beijing's diplomacy backfires (4/16/20)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8vNtCIMNjc>

Survey shows foreign businesses in Taiwan satisfied with Taiwan government's performance on COVID-19 (4/16/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/nearly-all-amcham-taipei-members-satisfied-with-taiwan-governments-coronavirus-performance-20200415/5373738.html>

China uses Twitter to fuel propaganda machine (4/16/20)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voaio-0416-shen-boyang-interview/5374589.html>

Cambridge University scholar: the spread of COVID-19 starts from China (4/15/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/genetic-research-shows-covid19-first-spread-in-china-20200415/5372620.html>

Study says China's PLA is considering setting up its own Twitter account (4/15/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/pla-social-media-strategy/5372617.html>

Fact check on Xinhua's timeline on coronavirus (Part 1) – China's domestic cover-up (4/15/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/xinhua-timeline-truth-part-2-04132020/5370503.html> 04/14/2020)

China restricts research into the origins of coronavirus (4/14/20)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voaio-0414-interview-with-xia-ming/5371196.html>

China on Twitter: Overseas publication of Fang Fang's diary floods Weibo with "big-character poster[s]"? (4/13/20)

<https://twitter.com/VOAChinese/status/1248936592737173506>

Claiming that the West wants to impose unfair compensation, the CCP fans anti-Western sentiments (4/13/20)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7tj7H16ZIs&t=37s>

Experts say democracy is essence of Taiwan Model in countering COVID-19 while China is using disinformation campaign to boost its international standing (4/11/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/experts-say-democracy-is-essence-of-taiwan-model-in-containing-coronavirus-pandemic-20200410/5367998.html>

Facing mounting blames for pandemic, Xi calls CCP to prepare for "external changes" (4/10/20)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7t_pdyTE66U&t=173s

U.S. Congress vows to hold WHO accountable, GOP leader: They are CCP's conspirator (4/10/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-congress-gop-denounces-who-and-china-conspirators-20200410/5368239.html>

Fact check on Xinhua's timeline on coronavirus – China hid the truth from the outsiders (4/9/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/xinhua-timeline-coronavirus-truth-part-1-04082020/5365130.html>

Pro and Con: Who does Phoenix TV really represent? (4/8/20)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voaprocon-0408-phoenix-tv-reporter/5364479.html>

China on Twitter: Former MOFA deputy chief jabs at "wolf warriors" and "bombard[s] the headquarters"? (4/7/20)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voaweishi-0406-china-on-twitter/5363045.html>

The epidemic started in China but not necessarily from China: Beijing plays tricks and deceives the world (4/7/20)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voaio-0406-huping-interview/5363075.html>

Analysis: Chinese propaganda learned from Russian playbook in 2019 (4/3/20)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/china-russia-disinformation-campaign-20200402/5358406.html>

Should U.S. Tech Companies ban CCP's Media Outlets? (3/30/20)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voaio-0330-should-the-u-s-tech-companies-ban-ccp-media-outlets-/5351705.html>

How China built a Twitter propaganda machine amid pandemic? (3/30/20)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voaio-0330-how-china-built-a-twitter-propaganda-machine-amid-coronavirus-pandemic/5351587.html>

U.S. and China fight over the origin of the coronavirus (3/25/20)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voaweishi-20200324-voaio-war-of-the-source-of-the-epidemic/5343317.html>

Chinese ambassador disown conspiracy theory about coronavirus (3/24/20)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/cui-tiankai-denounces-coronavirus-theory-20200323/5342642.html>

U.S. lawmakers urge White House to establish task force to counter CCP campaign (3/23/2020).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-senators-new-taskforce-combating-ccp-propoganda-20200323/5342542.html>

Chinese ambassador to U.S. disputes his own government's coronavirus conspiracy theory (3/23/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/cui-tiankai-denounces-coronavirus-theory-20200323/5342642.html>

Experts analyze Chinese fake news on coronavirus circulating in overseas Chinese communities and Trump administration's push back on Beijing's narrative (3/20/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/experts-chinese-fake-news-on-coronavirus-hits-overseas-chinese-trump-push-back-beijing-narrative-20200320/5338755.html>

Xi Jinping and China Sued for "Covering Up" Coronavirus Pandemic in Its "Own Economic Self-Interest" (3/19/20)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voaweishi-20200320-voaio-xi-jinping-is-sued-because-of-epidemic/5338126.html>

China's authoritarian way of containing coronavirus runs counter to Taiwan's democratic rule where government is accountable for actions (3/18/2020)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/analysis-on-china-model-in-fighting-pandemic-contrasting-taiwan-20200317/5332928.html>

China's powerful propaganda brings back many overseas Chinese as well as imported virus cases (3/17/20)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voaweishi-20200317-voaio-china-powerful-propaganda-brings-back-many-oversea-chinese/5332250.html>

Beijing frequently defames the U.S. over coronavirus, what is the reality? (3/17/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/factcheck-chinese-accusations-us-coronavirus20200317/5332567.html>

Controversy over the source of the outbreak between the U.S. and China escalates as Beijing launches conspiracy theory (3/16/20)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voaweishi-20200316-voaio-controversy-over-the-source-of-the-outbreak-between-the-us-and-china/5330699.html>

Wuhan Writer Fang Fang attacked for describing Wuhan situation in her open diary (3/13/20)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZF6Tn7nKWA&t=1884s>

Afraid of being challenged? Chinese diplomat promoting conspiracy theory blocks U.S. senator on Twitter (3/13/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-senators-push-back-conspiracy-theory-by-china-mofa-20200313/5328305.html>

National security adviser says China "covered up" coronavirus, delaying global response (3/11/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/OBrien-china-coronavirus-20200311/5324494.html>

RSF: Chinese online censor named as Predators of Press Freedom (3/11/20)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/china-agency-named-digital-predator-for-press-freedom-20200311/5325686.html>

Xi Jinping visits Wuhan for the first time since coronavirus outbreak, the worst has passed? Does Xi's visit today signal control of outbreak or control of propaganda? (3/10/20)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voaweishi-20200310-voaio-xi-jinping-visits-wuhan-for-the-first-time-since-coronavirus-outbreak/5322740.html>

Gratitude education: Wuhan boss faces backlash over calls to thank leaders (3/7/2020)
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/wuhan-kaiyuan-03072020/5319538.html>

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<https://projects.voanews.com/cambodia-election-2018/khmer/>

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- Prey Veng Residents Still Keen on News Broadcasts, Albeit Discreetly
<https://www.voacambodia.com/a/radio-silence-part-one/5117374.html>
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<https://www.voacambodia.com/a/radio-silence-part-three/5118710.html>

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- *Influx of Chinese in Cambodia Sparks Anti-Chinese Sentiments* (January 2020)
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- *Why So Many Chinese People Come To Cambodia For the Gold Rush*
<https://khmer.voanews.com/a/why-so-many-Chinese-people-come-to-Cambodia-for-the-gold-rush/5194403.html>

Cambodia 25 Years After Paris Peace Agreement: Remaining Issues (May 2017): Ahead of Cambodia's 2017 local commune elections in June, VOA Khmer traveled to Paris to produce a special report examining the degree of implementation of the Paris Peace Agreement for Cambodia, 25 years after its signing by the international community. The documentary looked at "remaining issues" and challenges to the full implementation of the terms of the agreement. The topic and theme of the special report proved relevant and timely for the commune elections.
<https://khmer.voanews.com/a/3854282.html>

Questioning Junta Leader on His Political Ambition: In an exclusive interview in March 2016, VOA Thai pushed Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, then a junta leader, to comment on his record of silencing critics and to divulge on his political ambition. News outlets across Thailand, from conservative The Nation to progressive Voice TV cited Thai on Prayut's comments. Three years later, Thailand held a national election under a new constitution written by military-backed drafters paving the way for Prayut to extend his power as prime minister. The general was held accountable for what he told VOA Thai about his intention to leave politics after his junta rule, as a high-profile member of Parliament cited VOA Thai as a source for his remark during her speech in the Parliament.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjNmzsA3bTg>

Countering Pro-military Narrative with Alternative Voices: Thailand's March 2019 elections, which have been criticized as deeply flawed, provided the military power a launch pad to deepen control under its brand of democracy. Political parties and activists critical of Prime Minister Prayut have suffered several types of setback, including a court ruling that disbanded Future Forward Party in February 2020. Not only did VOA Thai offer the audience thoughtful perspectives on the power struggle, but also the Service sought comments from people who were targeted by the government for carrying different opinions, as seen in the service's July 2019 interview with Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit, leader of the Future Forward Party. In June 2020, the Service also reported on Wanchalerm Satsaksit, a political activist living in exile in Cambodia, who went missing in Phnom Penh following his remarks critical of Prayut.
<https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/thailand-braces-lame-duck-government-once-election-tally-released>

Exposing Organized Protest at UNGA: In one of the most watched events that put Thailand on an international stage, VOA Thai published an exposé that pro-protesters who gathered in New York City in late September 2019 during UNGA meetings to confront Prime Minister Prayut were non-Thai speakers and brought by an organizer. The team also interviewed Prayut, as part of their coverage which encompassed 22 video reports, social media clips, live broadcast, radio stories and web posts, reaching nearly 1 million people on VOA Thai's platforms. BBC Thai, The Nation, Thairath, Matichon, TNN and Voice TV cited VOA Thai for the UNGA coverage.
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=440089623519492>

Vietnamese government "lied" about producing COVID-19 test kits (March 2020).
<https://www.voatiengviet.com/a/vn-tung-noi-lam-duoc-kit-xet-nghiem-covid-19-nay-lai-nho-han-quoc-giup/5330598.html>

EURASIA DIVISION

VOA Russian's one-hour-long *East. West. Berlin* documentary dedicated to the fall of the Wall and the end of the Cold War counters the narrative in Russia about the transition to a free market economy and negative perceptions of the West. Carried by *Current Time America* and on social media, the documentary takes a firsthand look at Berlin before and after the Wall fell and features people from all walks of life, including a former U.S. diplomat, who share their personal accounts of what it was like to live in a divided city and the enormous impact it had on their lives.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=477818109486403>

Maria Zakharova, head of Russia's Foreign Ministry press service, recalled her apologies to VOA Russian Service reporter Danila Galperovich in her speech at OSCE Conference on Media Freedom and Safety of Journalists in Moscow on November 6th. Zakharova's boss, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, in January 2017, falsely accused the VOA reporter of "lying and perverting the facts" during his press conference. Galperovich, reacting to Lavrov's accusations, published a post on Facebook, setting the facts straight and asking whether the minister was just misinformed or tried to hurt the VOA reporter's reputation on purpose. Zakharova commented on Galperovich's post with straight apologies on behalf of the minister.

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/moscow-protests-foreign-meddling-accusations/5040510.html>

With child adoption playing a big, contentious role in U.S.-Russia relations, VOA Russian Service VJ Svetlana Prudovsky traveled to Scranton, Pennsylvania, where 15 years ago she produced a story about an American family who adopted two sisters from Russia. The sisters, now in their twenties, have done well for themselves as witnessed by the VOA reporter who followed their adoption and their arrival in the United States. The story presented a unique counterpoint to narratives promoted by the Kremlin-controlled media about how Russian-born children were being mistreated by their foster families in America. It aired on the Current Time channel and also resonated well with the social media audience, with more than 62,000 views and over 1,000 comments, shares, and reactions.

<https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/10154680877677026>

In an exclusive interview with VOA Russian, self-exiled Russian oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky said no improvement in U.S.-Russian relations is possible while President Vladimir Putin is president because he is "too toxic to deal with." He also claimed Putin is leading a "mafia state," unable to offer any new approach to get Russia from an economic and political rut. "For us, he doesn't exist anymore as a politician."

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iH04qR_bwwY

Ukrainian activists, officials and media talked to VOA Ukrainian about fighting Russian disinformation in Ukraine. The piece included exclusive interviews with the head of Ukraine's Parliamentary Committee on the Freedom of the Press, Viktorija Sumar, and media experts Natalia Ligacheva, Diana Dutsyk and Head of Hromadske TV Radio Kyrylo Lukerenco.

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/602457220207345/>

NATO's Deepfake COVID: Among the many areas of concern around technology, perhaps one of the most widely discussed has been the threat posed by "deepfakes:" synthetic audio, images and video generated with artificial intelligence. Could a well-timed video hoax be launched by a malicious actor to disrupt an election? Might a massive wave of high-fidelity fakes swamp social media platforms and further erode trust in the media and institutions?

<https://www.zeriamerikes.com/a/nato-teknologija-mund%C3%ABson-forma-t%C3%AB-sofistikuara-dizinformimi/5410255.html>

China's Investments in the Balkans: China has increased its economic influence in the Balkans through its Belt and Road Initiative. Experts in Albania, interviewed by VOA's Albanian Service, say that most of the time what China calls investments are burdening, unsustainable loans that have increased the national debt of several countries. They say that in most cases China's projects are opaque, and require a Chinese loan and the work to be carried out by a Chinese company, typically state-owned.

<https://www.zeramerikes.com/a/huadh%C3%ABnia-forma-kryesore-e-investimeve-kineze-n%C3%AB-ballkan/5437946.html>

VOA Armenian actively fights against disinformation and fake news usually spread in Armenia by Kremlin proxies. In recent months, the Service produced films, interviews, infographics and TV packages that confront and refute Russian disinformation about COVID-19, the alleged U.S. role in its spread, and democratic values. The following story illustrates how Russian propaganda attempts to frame biolabs, opened in Armenia to help fight against biological threats and the only source for COVID-19 testing in Armenia, as the actual source of the virus.

<https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/5439753.html>

VOA Armenian video report featuring a discussion with experts about the danger of disinformation for public health:

<https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/5427506.html>

VOA Armenian's short series of films introduces the target audience to the methods and strategy of Kremlin proxies in their efforts to weaken Armenian citizens' trust in democratic values and institutions and instead value the "strong state," as Moscow understands it.

<https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/5305606.html>

<https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/5305604.html>

VOA Bosnian debunks with facts false Serbian claims about U.S. Supreme Court.

<https://business.facebook.com/studiowashington/videos/263924777902736/>

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/lazna-vijest-o-americkom-vrhovnom-sudu---sredstvo-za-manipulaciju-javnosc-u-bih/5276232.html>

VOA Bosnian delivers a fact-based explanation of the so-called "black list" – U.S. sanctions against foreign officials and companies, why the U.S. does this, and how effective it is.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/korupcija-bih-sad-state-department/5440776.html>

A documentary series about the rise of ISIL in Bosnia gives a thorough picture of radical Islam and debunks anti-American sentiment among radicalized Muslims in the Balkans.

<https://projects.voanews.com/salafism-in-bosnia/>

<https://ba.voanews.com/p/6666.html>

Kleptocracy and Oligarchy: VOA Georgian interview with Charles Davidson, publisher of *National Interest*:

<https://www.amerikishma.com/a/interview-with-charles-davidson/5133683.html>

VOA Georgian report on infodemics during the pandemic in the South Caucasus:

<https://www.amerikishma.com/a/infodemia-in-georgia-and-south-caucasus/5436797.html>

VOA Georgian interview with Richard Stengel, former U.S. assistant secretary overseeing public diplomacy:

<https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/former-undersecretary-richard-stengel-about-russian-disinformation/5134825.html>

Anatomy of Russian disinformation: Georgian Service interview with Alina Poliyakova, president, Center of European Policy Analysis:

<https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/russian-propaganda-interview/4615961.html>

VOA Georgian interview with disinformation specialist and author Peter Pomerantsev:

<https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/peter-pomerantsev-interview/4049836.html>

Serbian Service interview with Bulgarian researcher Tihomira Doncheva, co-author of a NATO-sponsored study *Russian Footprint in the information environment of Western Balkans*. Doncheva claims Russia is using its media narratives to try to deepen divisions among peoples of the Western Balkans.

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/mediji-interviu-tihomira-donceva-rusija-uticaj/5412665.html>

Serbian Service interview with Stevan Janjic, head of the independent web portal Fake News Search, on how the proliferation of fake news by pro-government media in Serbia is pushing the country towards Russia and China:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/la%C5%BEne-vesti-guraju-srbiju-u-zagrljaj-rusije-i-kine-/5419769.html>

VOA Serbian report on the influence of Russian propaganda and soft power in Serbia, part of a documentary series on the status of media in Serbia:

<https://www.facebook.com/otvorenistudio/videos/10155768412496325/>

VOA Serbian report on the influence of pro-government tabloids in Serbia, part of a documentary series on the status of Serbian media:

<https://www.facebook.com/otvorenistudio/videos/10155797330026325/>

VOA Serbian report on the influence of Russian media propaganda in Serbia:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/medijski-uticaj-moskve-na-srbiju/3630351.html>

LATIN AMERICA DIVISION

In 2018, a Voz de America fake news website was spotted targeting Venezuela. The website caused confusion among the public, prompting VOA to take measures with regards to the site's social media accounts. The Spanish digital team initiated a campaign that continues to this day enforcing the brand.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20191112174102/https://vozdeamerica.org/>

VOA Spanish created a special section on its website, VOA Te Explica, at the request of media partners in the region to explain various aspects of COVID-19. The request was in response to disinformation regarding the pandemic.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/voa-explainers>

The government of Venezuela and disinformation during the COVID-19 crisis. This report is about how journalists face disinformation in Venezuela and the challenges to address it.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/venezuela-lucha-maduro-covid19-salas-redaccion>

Venezuelan doctors try to go to social media to clear disinformation on COVID-19.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/medicos-venezolanos-se-mudan-al-2-0-en-medio-de-crisis-por-coronavirus>

USAID Interim Director John Barsa provides details on humanitarian aid to Venezuela, offering an alternative voice to the propaganda of the Maduro regime.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/usaid-niega-que-dinero-destinado-ayuda-humanitaria-vaya-personalmente-guaido>

USAID denies disinformation by the Maduro government on humanitarian aid to Venezuela

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/usaid-niega-que-dinero-destinado-ayuda-humanitaria-vaya-personalmente-guaido>

Report on how the Venezuela regime promotes disinformation as a means of population control.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/cibertropas-oxford-reporte-noticias-falsas>

Application is unveiled in Venezuela to focus on disinformation campaigns of the Maduro regime.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/venezuela-ccn-pone-disposicion-aplicacion-para-combatir-censura-y-fake-news>

U.S. accuses China and Russia of spreading disinformation regarding the situation in Venezuela.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/estadosunidos/eeuu-acusa-rusia-china-promover-campa%C3%B1as-desinformacion>

Radio report on U.S. statements regarding Chinese disinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/desinformacion-latam-rusia-china-201541>

Report on disinformation in Ecuador regarding COVID-19.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/coronavirus/ecuatorianos-lloran-por-desinformacion-sobre-sepultura-de-fallecidos-por-covid19>

Report on the impact of disinformation to combat COVID-19 in Latin America.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/america-latina/la-desinformacion-agraba-la-crisis-causada-por-la-pandemia>

Report on the U.S. government focusing on Chinese disinformation regarding COVID-19.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/estadosunidos/pompeo3ahaye2809cevidenciasenormese2809ddeguecoronavirusseinicic3b3enlaboratoriochino>

Independent report on Chinese government disinformation on the spread of COVID19

<https://www.voanoticias.com/coronavirus/eeuu-informes-china-covi19>

PERSIAN DIVISION

The family of former FBI agent Bob Levinson who disappeared in Iran turns to VOA Persian to confront the government of Iran that has been hiding the truth about Levinson's whereabouts.

Levinson Family: <https://ir.voanews.com/a/iran-levinson-court/5321727.html>

Congressman Chris Smith: <https://ir.voanews.com/a/us-iran-levinson/5321686.html>

Levinson Son: <https://ir.voanews.com/a/5196108.html>

VOA Persian uses VOA reporter's direct access to senior Pentagon officials to dispel Iran's disinformation falsely claiming that Iran's retaliatory missile strike on a U.S. base in Iraq after General Soleimani's elimination resulted in the death of 80 American soldiers.
 Pentagon reaction: <https://ir.voanews.com/a/reuters-pentagon-iran/5281848.html>
 Defense Secretary Mark Esper on the matter: <https://ir.voanews.com/a/us-iran/5267470.html>

VOA Persian uses user-generated videos to dispel false claims by the Iranian government that no excessive force was used against the peaceful protesters in November in December.
<https://ir.voanews.com/a/iran-protest/5170687.html?nocache=1>
<https://ir.voanews.com/a/iran-protest-gas-price/5168728.html?nocache=1>
<https://ir.voanews.com/a/iran-high-price-gas/5169283.html?nocache=1>

VOA Persian uses eyewitness accounts and user-generated videos to dispel the Iranian government's disinformation about the number of peaceful protesters killed by the regime's security forces.
 UGC video show the government shot people in three deferent cities
<https://ir.voanews.com/a/iran-protest-gas-price/5168770.html?nocache=1>

VOA Persian uses exclusive interview with Brian Hook, U.S. Special Representative for Iran and senior advisor to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, to dispel Iran's false claim that U.S. sanctions hinder supply of medicine and medical devices for the Iranian people,
 Hook: <https://ir.voanews.com/a/5269739.html?nocache=1>

Following the arrest of an Iranian diplomat for handing over to two sleeper operatives a bomb to be detonated at an opposition rally in Paris, VOA Persian uses access to police in France and Austria to dispel the Iranian foreign minister's claim that it was a "false flag" attempt to smear his government.

VOA Persian uses data from U.S. and European officials and experts to counter the Iranian government's initial denial that the Iranian military shot down the Ukrainian airliner, killing 176 passengers and crew when Iran maintained deception for days.
 President Trump: <https://ir.voanews.com/a/us-iran-trump/5238768.html?nocache=1>
 Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau: <https://ir.voanews.com/a/canada-iran/5239030.html?nocache=1>

VOA Persian uses international sources and experts and alternative sources inside Iran to counter the Iranian government's denial of the escalating coronavirus threat and false claims about the casualties.
<https://ir.voanews.com/a/iran-who-corona-virus/5331396.html?nocache=1>
<https://ir.voanews.com/a/us-iran-pompeo-corona/5327420.html?nocache=1>
<https://ir.voanews.com/a/us-officials-concern-iran-facilitating-spread--coronavirus/5329763.html?nocache=1>

VOA Persian uses data from the Israeli intelligence report to dispel the Iranian government's denial and false claims about Iran's past nuclear weapons program.
 Netanyahu: <https://ir.voanews.com/a/netanyahu-press-iran/5076016.html>

VOA Persian uses access to military and security experts and reports to counter Iran's denial that the Revolutionary Guard Corps was behind a series of bomb attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf of Hormuz

Pentagon spokesperson: <https://ir.voanews.com/a/us-iran/5092042.html?nocache=1>
 Congressman Scott Perry exclusive interview: <https://ir.voanews.com/a/us-iran-scott-perry/5090822.html?nocache=1>

Coverage of the Coronavirus in Iran – On April 19, VOA Persian published an article that offered guidance on the importance of choosing and using the right kind of face masks during the COVID-19 outbreak in Iran. The article cited findings from the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and explained the significant differences between homemade masks, surgical masks and N95 masks. Instructions on which mask to wear for a specific environment, how often the masks should be used before cleaning and proper techniques for care and sterilization were also included. The article also noted that people who use face masks should not rely on them entirely for proper hygiene and protection against the COVID-19 virus, and that social distancing and frequent hand washing are still effective and necessary.
<https://ir.voanews.com/a/proper-use-of-face-mask/5378764.html>

Coverage of Michael White's release from an Iranian prison:
<https://ir.voanews.com/top-stories/us-iran-hostage>
<https://ir.voanews.com/latestnews/us-iran-trump-11>

Plugged In with Greta Van Susteren versioned for the Iranian audience:
Lessons from Auschwitz:

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/ba-grta-wn-sastrn-drs-hayy-az-ashwytz-253215>
China and Coronavirus:

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/ba-grta-wn-sastrn-chyn-w-wyrws-krwna-234347>

SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA DIVISION

Urdu Service story on Uighur Muslims of China who struggle to protect their identity:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nbou3nlinX0&feature=youtu.be>

Urdu Service story on disinformation about Pakistan-China Corridor and CPEC Reality (Pakistan and United States):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxlRROaTk_w&feature=youtu.be

Afghan Service web feature on Iran's propaganda about the Syrian war and sending Afghan refugees to the war zone:
<https://www.darivoo.com/a/afghan-fighters-in-syrian-civil-war/4130261.html>

Afghan Service: U.S. official says fighting against ISIS disinformation and propaganda is getting harder:
<https://www.darivoo.com/a/us-in-crisis-mood-in-fighting-isis-online-messaging/3407803.html>

Disinformation: How ISIS recruits? Two Afghan ISIS fighters tell their story:
<https://www.darivoo.com/a/afghanistan-is-kids/4234482.html>

Afghanistan's Ministry of Health rejected claims of a local herbal healer for inventing COVID-19 virus and closed his clinic:
<https://www.darivoo.com/a/alkozai-vaccine/5447372.html>

The Deewa Service continues to present a true picture amid disinformation about [COVID-19](#) and polio vaccines in Pakistan.

<https://www.voadeewanews.com/a/4889057.html>

Azerbaijani interview with Leyla Mustafayeva of Fact Check about the disinformation campaign with regarding to COVID-19 pandemic:

<https://www.amerikaninsesi.org/a/leyla-mustafayeva-h%C3%B6kum%C9%99t-mediya-t%C9%99zyiq%C9%99ri-dayand%C4%B1rma%C4%B1d%C4%B1r/5432049.html>

Azerbaijani interview with media expert Gulu Maharramli about the significance of a free press in fighting disinformation:

<https://www.amerikaninsesi.org/a/qulu-m%C9%99h%C9%99rr%C9%99mli-azad-media-c%C9%99miyy%C9%99t-%C3%BC%A7%C3%BCn-oksigen-dem%C9%99kdir/5377075.html>

LEARNING ENGLISH

News Literacy: Learning English, in partnership with the Center for New Literacy at Stony Brook University, produced a college-level course for students to learn about real news vs. fake news, source verification, establishing the truth, balance and fairness, quality of news reports, and news through social media. The series is being used in classrooms around the world and has also been versioned in other languages.

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/p/6840.html>

MAJOR INTERVIEWS OF U.S. OFFICIALS

VOA's Central Newsroom and language services regularly send reporting teams to Capitol Hill to seek interviews with prominent lawmakers on the biggest stories making news each day. These interviews, in Senate Hallways, outside hearing rooms, in lawmaker one-on-ones in offices across the city, are shared widely within VOA and fed in a wide range of radio, television and internet programming. From presidents to members of the U.S. Congress, VOA teams conduct hundreds of such interviews with lawmakers, top State Department and Defense Department officials and the president, as part of its mission to explain American government policies. VOA interviews offer the U.S. perspective, as well as a wide spectrum of opinion, on issues of relevance to audiences around the world, serving as a forum for viewers, visitors and commentators for an exchange of information and meaningful debate on critically important political, economic and social issues.

NEWS CENTER

Hours after Hong Kong made it a crime to disrespect China's national anthem, the State Department spokesperson told VOA it means Beijing has broken its democracy pledge on Hong Kong.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/us-accuses-china-breaking-democracy-pledge-hong-kong>

U.S. Undersecretary for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment Keith Krach spoke with VOA about the impact of a Chinese candidate on one of the world's leading intellectual rights bodies.

<https://www.voanews.com/economy-business/us-warns-against-china-leadership-intellectual-property-watchdog>

The top U.S. General in South Korea speaks with VOA about the coronavirus outbreak in North Korea.

<https://www.voanews.com/science-health/coronavirus-outbreak/north-koreas-virus-free-claim-impossible-top-us-general-says>

U.S. Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook speaks with VOA Persian about the extent of the coronavirus outbreak in Iran.

<https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/voa-news-iran/us-sharpens-criticism-irans-virus-response-some-friday-prayers-suspended>

White House Economic Advisor Peter Navarro speaks with VOA about whether the president is considering a rollback of economic tariffs in his talks with China.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/trump-dismisses-chinas-claim-tariff-rollback-deal>

Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) and other lawmakers speak with VOA about measures blocking weapon sales to Yemen.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/us-senate-halts-efforts-prevent-arms-sales-bahrain-qatar>

During Trade talks with China, Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) talks to VOA's Mandarin service about U.S. expectations.

<https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/trump-optimistic-about-trade-talks-china>

A top ally of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny speaks with VOA's Russian Service about the jailed critic's legal case.

<https://www.voanews.com/europe/voa-exclusive-navalny-deputy-calls-assets-freeze-predictable-psychological-projection>

Representative Ilhan Omar speaks with VOA about remarks that sparked controversy.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/rep-omar-speaks-voa-about-remarks-sparked-controversy>

U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) speaks with VOA Russian service about the needed response to detentions of activists.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/us-senator-cardin-russias-jailing-activists-demand-us-led-response>

President Trump speaks with VOA ahead of the Democratic presidential debate in Florida.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/us-politics/us-democratic-presidential-contenders-debate-how-beat-trump>

New U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador Ronald Johnson speaks with VOA in his first interview since his appointment

<https://www.voanews.com/americas/voa-exclusive-interview-us-ambassador-el-salvador-ronald-johnson-speaks-voas-carla-babb>

Representative Karen Bass (D-CA) speaks with VOA about African refugees.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/us-congresswoman-talks-voa-about-african-refugees>

U.S. Ambassador to Russia Jon Huntsman tells VOA Russia must change its behavior.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/voa-interview-us-ambassador-says-russia-must-change-behavior>

Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Bob Corker (R-TN) and other lawmakers speak with VOA about the threat from North Korea following President Trump's talks with Kim Jong Un.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/us-lawmakers-dismiss-trump-assertion-north-koreas-nuclear-threat-over>

Senator Marco Rubio talks with VOA about U.S. concerns over China's giant technology company ZTE.

<https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/trump-us-has-little-give-trade-talks-china>

In 2018, VOA followed two freshmen lawmakers through their first months in office.

<https://www.voanews.com/climbing-hill>

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tells VOA the United States has no intention of allowing Russia to question Ambassador Michael McFaul.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/pompeo-voa-us-wont-allow-russian-questioning-former-us-ambassador>

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/voas-interview-mike-pompeo>

The Navy's top admiral talks with VOA about the increased threat to Washington from Chinese and Russian military vessels in the North Atlantic.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/us-navys-top-admiral-cites-increased-threat-ocean-nearest-washington>

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo speaks with VOA about a new security framework aimed at ending Iran's nuclear program.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/voa-persian-interview-secretary-state-pompeo-iran>

Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), John Cornyn (R-TX) and others speak with VOA about the announced U.S.-North Korean deal.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/us-politics/south-korean-president-welcomes-us-north-korea-deal>

A new lawsuit targeting California's sanctuary policies drew mixed reactions from American lawmakers.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/cheers-jeers-capitol-hill-lawsuit-targeting-californias-sanctuary-policies>

President Trump weighed in on climate change policies during an interview with VOA.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/trump-weighs-climate-change>

White House Economic Advisor Peter Navarro speaks with VOA about the China trade talks.

<https://www.voanews.com/archive/interview-transcript-peter-navarro-us-china-talks-trade>

President Trump speaks with VOA about the decision to end war games with South Korea.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/us-politics/singapore-trump-says-he-will-halt-us-south-korea-war-games>

U.S. lawmakers condemn actions of Turkish security personnel during a visit by the prime minister.

<https://www.voanews.com/europe/us-again-condemns-actions-turkish-security-personnel-over-violence-during-erdogan-visit>

A new U.S. Senate measure ends Obama-era rules requiring more transparency in oil and gas company payments.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/us-senate-ends-rule-requiring-oil-gas-company-transparency>

Congressman Jim McGovern (D-MA) calls for a new U.S. policy in Tibet.

<https://www.voanews.com/east-asia/us-congressman-calls-new-us-policy-tibet>

U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad speaks with VOA about the missed opportunities in the Afghan-Pakistan relationship.

<https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/former-us-ambassador-kabul-reflects-missed-opportunities>

Blackwater founder Erik Prince speaks with VOA about reports on plans to privatize the U.S. war in Afghanistan.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/plan-privatize-us-war-afghanistan-gets-icy-reception>

AFRICA DIVISION

U.S. State Department Ambassador-at-large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback told English to Africa about President Trump committing \$25 million to promote religious freedom.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/us-envoy-promotes-faith-alliance-significant-rights-initiative>

"VOA is a very important source of information, another source that will help diversify the media landscape here in Togo," U.S. Ambassador David Gilmour said during the launch of VOA's newest FM frequency.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaDjsBb3DEw>

The new U.S. Ambassador to Somalia Donald Yamamoto used his first interview to tell [VOA Somali](#) about the Trump Administration reopening a permanent diplomatic presence in Mogadishu.
<https://www.voanews.com/africa/new-us-ambassador-somalia-sees-path-peace-prosperity>
<https://twitter.com/us2somalia/status/1067313430661607424>

"Not only in my race but throughout the country people are choosing hope over fear and unity over division," Ilhan Omar told VOA following her election as one of the first Muslim women to serve in Congress. VOA Somali followed Omar throughout her campaign in Minneapolis and was her only election-night interview.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7dM0J_LYEA

English to Africa Service interviewed U.S. Assistant Secretary Of State for African Affairs Tibor Nagy about the future of U.S.-Africa relations:
<https://www.facebook.com/voafrica54/videos/vb.485485248171861/235014873836434/?type=2&theater> (English)
<https://www.voaswahili.com/a/4590302.html> (Swahili)

U.S. Ambassador to South Sudan Thomas Hushek told VOA's South Sudan in Focus that the United States will no longer continue funding peace deals that are violated time and again by warring parties.
<https://www.voanews.com/episode/south-sudan-focus-1859751>

U.S. Ambassador to Uganda Deborah Malac gave an interview to VOA on a trip with Ugandan coffee growers to expand exports to the United States.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQok9jTpBDc&feature=youtu.be>

The Amharic Service interviewed Rep. Mike Howard Coffman (R-CO) about the HR 128 (Ethiopia Human Rights Resolution) process in Congress.
<https://amharic.voanews.com/a/4231855.html>

U.S. Ambassador to Zimbabwe Harry Thomas Jr. discussed U.S.-Zimbabwe relations with English to Africa after the fall of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe.
<https://www.voanews.com/episode/us-zimbabwe-relations-straight-talk-africa-3767941>

"The U.S. is stepping up to the plate but...given the needs, more needs to be done," U.S. Representative Chris Smith (R-NJ) told VOA English to Africa after a visit to famine-threatened parts of Central Africa.
<https://www.voanews.com/africa/us-lawmaker-wants-root-causes-south-sudan-war-tackled>

The Hausa Service interviewed prominent U.S. lawmakers such as Frederica Wilson (D-FL) on important issues in our target area such as the abduction of the Chibok girls by Boko Haram militants.
<https://www.voahausa.com/a/grace-alheri-abdu-domin-iyali-satumba-21-2017-hira-da-frederica-wilson/4041458.html>

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC DIVISION

On the anniversary of Tiananmen Square, Senator Rubio: Chinese political reform is a difficult task we can't give up. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Ted Cruz (R-TX), and Pat Toomey (R-PA) (6/4/2020).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-congress-china-tiananmen-square-31st-anniversary-20200603/5448171.html>

Bipartisan lawmakers condemned China for approval of Hong Kong national security law. VOA Mandarin interviewed Reps. Steve Chabot (R-OH), Brad Sherman (D-CA), John Curtis (R-UT), and Glen Growthman (R-WI) (5/28/2020).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-law-makers-react-to-pompeo-hk-statement/5438929.html>

U.S. senators introduce bipartisan legislation to sanction CCP officials pushing for Hong Kong national security law. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senators Rick Scott (R-FL) and Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ) (5/22/2020).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/bipartisan-lawmakers-introduce-sanction-bill-defend-hk-autonomy-20200521/5431222.html>

U.S. Congress calls for bipartisan probe into CCP and Wuhan Virology Lab. VOA Mandarin exclusive phone interview with Rep. Phil Roe (R-TN) (4/30/2020).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-congress-calls-for-bipartisan-probe-into-ccp-and-covid-origins-20200429/5398494.html>

Exclusive interview with Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX) on China's handling of the COVID-19 outbreak (4/24/2020).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voa-interview-with-congressman-mike-mccaul-on-china-covid19-coverup-20200423/5389717.html>

Congressman Ami Bera (D-CA), Chairman of House Foreign Affairs Committee Asia and Pacific subcommittee, and a physician by trade, talked about the coronavirus pandemic and China's disinformation campaign (4/22/2020).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/interview-with-congressman-ami-bera-part-ii-us-china-relations-20200422/5384873.html>

GOP lawmakers urge State Department to investigate CCP's cover-up of COVID-19 pandemic. VOA Mandarin interviewed Reps. Michael McCaul (R-TX) and Jim McGovern (D-MA) (3/28/2020).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/gop-lawmaker-urges-state-dept-to-investigate-ccp-covid19-coverup-20200327/5349616.html>

U.S. Congress introduces bipartisan bicameral legislation aimed at stopping Uyghur forced labor. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Tom Suozzi (D-NY) (3/12/2020).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-cecc-uyghur-forced-labor-and-global-supply-chains-20200311/5325624.html>

U.S. Senators introduce legislation to ensure network security in trade negotiation. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senators John Thune (R-SD), Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Ron Johnson (R-WI) (3/11/2020).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-senate-bill-telecom-network-security-mandated-in-trade-pacts-20200310/5323920.html>

Senatro Marco Rubio: Conoravirus pandemic challenges China as a global power. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Josh Hawley (R-MO) 2/13/2020:

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-senator-rubio-conoravirus-china-global-power-challenge-20200212/5286465.html>

GOP senators are hopeful about the progress of U.S.-China trade deal negotiation. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senators David Perdue (R-GA), Pat Roberts (R-KS), James Lankford (R-OK) and Bob Menendez (D-NJ) (12/13/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-senate-reax-first-phase-china-trade-deal-20191212/5204382.html>

U.S. lawmaker says Taiwan's presidential election is seen as a referendum on China influence. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), Jim Risch (R-ID), Ted Yoho (R-FL) and Scott Perry (R-PA) (12/12/2020).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-congress-taiwan-election-china-referendum-20191211/5202834.html>

U.S. senators met with majority leader to push for Hong Kong act. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), Jim Risch (R-ID), Rick Scott (R-FL), Josh Hawley (R-MO) and Ted Cruz (R-TX) (11/14/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/US-SENATORS-MET-WITH-MAJORITY-LEADER-TO-PUSH-FOR-HONG-KONG-ACT-20191113/5165462.html>

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-senate-hk-bill-hotline-20191114/5167093.html>

US senators warn Beijing against intervening in Hong Kong protests. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senators Ron Johnson (R-WI), Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and Mitt Romney (R-UT) (8/6/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-senator-warns-beijing-against-intervening-in-hong-kong-protests-20190806/5031678.html>

U.S. lawmakers condemned China over sanctions against U.S. business for arms sales to Taiwan. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and Reps. Eliot Engel (D-NY), Michael McCaul (R-TX) and Ted Yoho (R-FL) (7/13/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-arms-sales-taiwan-china-sanction-20190713/4998887.html>

U.S. Congress introduces legislation to review Hong Kong autonomy status as protests continue in Hong Kong. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) (6/13/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/congress-hong-kong-democracy-freedom-20190613/4957967.html>

House Speaker Pelosi recalls visit to Tiananmen Square on the 30th anniversary. VOA Mandarin interviewed House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Reps. Eliot Engel (D-NY) and Steve Chabot (R-OH), and Senators Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Cory Gardner (R-CO) (4/5/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/speaker-pelosi-on-china-political-reforms-20190604/4946266.html>

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-congress-remembrance-june-4th-1989-20190603/4944225.html>

Bipartisan lawmakers support White House's Ban on Huawei. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Cory Gardner (R-CO), Chris Coons (D-DE) and Dan Sullivan (R-AK) (5/16/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/US-Senators-Statement-On-Executive-Order-And-Huawei-20190516/4920079.html>

U.S. senators raise concerns over Huawei's relationship with CCP. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), John Cornyn (R-TX), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Angus King (I-ME), Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Joe Manchin (D-WV) (04/22/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-senate-intel-huawei-backdoor-evidence-20190422/4886853.html>

Bipartisan lawmakers reaffirm to deepen relationship with Taiwan. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senators Cory Gardner (R-CO), James Inhofe (R-OK), Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Ben Cardin (D-MD) (4/11/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-senate-taiwan-relations-act-40-anniversary20190410/4871034.html>

Bipartisan lawmakers oppose to use Huawei as a bargaining chip in trade deal with China. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), John Cornyn (R-TX), Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) (4/3/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-senate-china-trade-deal-huawei-criminal-cases-20190402/4859176.html>

U.S. lawmakers introduce legislation to counter Chinese influence in US universities. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senator Rob Portman (R-OH) (03/18/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-congress-bill-to-counter-china-political-influence-20190318/4836580.html>

US lawmakers are cautiously optimistic about Trump-Kim summit. VOA Mandarin interviewed Reps. Gerry Connolly (D-VA), Ted Yoho (R-FL) and Steve Chabot (R-OH) (2/26/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/congress-cautiously-optimistic-trump-kim-summit-20190226/4805536.html>

U.S. senators praise U.S. indictment against Huawei. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL) and James Inhofe (R-OK) (1/30/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-senator-huawei-indictments/4764727.html>

VOA Mandarin conducted an exclusive interview with senior GOP Senator Jon Kyl (R-AZ) (retired at the end of 2018) on China's military development and strategy (12/18/2018).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/sen-kyl-interview-on-us-china-defense/4704741.html>

Bipartisan senators blast China for arresting Canadian citizens. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), Bob Corker (R-TN) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) (12/14/2018).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-lawmakers-on-canadians-in-china/4700295.html>

U.S. senators express concerns over tariff war with China. VOA Mandarin interviewed Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), Bob Corker (R-TN) and Ben Cardin (D-MD) (9/19/2018).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/tariff-20180918/4577722.html>

Congressman Robert Pittenger (R-NC) (retired in January 2019), then-Commissioner of Congressional Executive on China and Chairman of the Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, talked about a bill he proposed, "Foreign Investment Risk Review

Modernization Acc," which aimed to modernize the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, CFIUS. (2/26/2018)

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/robert-pittenger-20180226/4271406.html>

Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) (retired in January 2019), then-Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Eurasia and emerging threat subcommittee, talked about the North Korean nuclear crisis, and U.S.-China-Taiwan relations (2/21/2018).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/4262803.html>

VOA interview with U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad on Trade and North Korea (12/23/2017).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voa-interview-with-ambassador-brandstad-20171222/4176293.html>

Congressman Rick Larsen (D-WA), co-chair of U.S.-China Group, talked about China's 19th Party Congress and U.S.-China trade relations (10/10/2017).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/Rep-Rick-Larsen-on-US-China-trade-20171010/4064469.html>

Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA), 2016 Democratic vice presidential candidate, talked about the North Korean nuclear crisis and China's role in it (9/5/2017).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/interview-kaine-20170905/4016104.html>

Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ), then-Chair of Congressional Executive Commission on China, talked to VOA Mandarin following the death of Chinese Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo about Liu and China's human rights violations (7/18/2017).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/smith-interview-20170718/3949124.html>

Congressman Jim McGovern (D-MA), then-co-chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and a longtime advocate for Tibetan rights, talked about his recent visit to Tibet and a bill he proposed, the "Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act." (6/2//2017).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/interview-with-rep-jim-mcgovern-20170602/3884687.html>

Congressman Chris Stewart (R-UT), member of the House Appropriations Committee and Intelligence Committee, talked about his recent trip to China, U.S.-China relations, and North Korea's missile test (5/29/2017).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/chris-interview-20170529/3875836.html>

Congressman Ted Yoho (R-FL), then-Chair of House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, talked about U.S.-China relations and arms sales to Taiwan (3/30/2017).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/Representative-Ted-Yoho-on-US-China-relations-North-Korea-crisis-20170330/3789309.html>

VOA Mandarin interviewed the nominee for Ambassador to China Terry Branstad (2/5/2017).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/Exclusive-Interview-Branstad-20170204/3706285.html>

Congressman Judy Chu (D-CA), Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, talked to the Mandarin Service about the role of Asian Americans in the 2016 presidential election (10/04/2016).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/judy-chu-interview-20161004/3536697.html>

Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), (now Senator Marsha Blackburn) then-Vice Chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and an early supporter of then-candidate Trump, talked about the 2016 presidential election and why Trump was the best candidate for president (9/23/2016).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voa-interview-rep-blackburn-20160923/3523270.html>

VOA Khmer interviewed U.S. Congressman Steve Chabot (R-OH) about possible U.S. sanctions against Cambodian officials following recent government crackdown against the opposition, NGOs and independent media. Chabot represents a district in Ohio with a Cambodian-American population. He, along with Congressman Alan Lowenthal, a Democrat who represents the largest Cambodian community in the United States in southern California, co-founded the Bipartisan Congressional Cambodia Caucus to bring together members interested in Cambodian politics. (November 2017)

<https://www.voacambodia.com/a/4097426.html>

VOA Vietnamese interviewed U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Nguyen Tu Huan (October 2019).

<https://www.voatiengviet.com/a/pho-de-doc-nguyen-tu-huan/5119101.html>

VOA Vietnamese interviewed Major General in the United States Army, Lapthe Chau Flora (March 2020).

<https://www.voatiengviet.com/a/chuan-tuong-chau-lap-the-duoc-thang-quan-ham-thieu-tuong/5417996.html>

EURASIA DIVISION

VOA's reporting is regularly picked up by major Russian independent media. A VOA Russian 2017 interview with Ambassador Daniel Fried, the former State Department coordinator for sanctions policy, was cited by 256 outlets with a combined online audience of 12.8 million users.

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/russia-sanctions-putin-state-department-/3960464.html>

VOA Russian interview with U.S. ambassador to NATO Kay Baily Hutchinson in which she warns of Russia's anti-Western disinformation about the COVID-19 pandemic. The interview was also shared by Current Time and RFE/RL's Russian Service:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/nato-covid-19-desinformation/5371676.html>

VOA Russian interviewed Brian Hook, special U.S. envoy for Iran, who commented on news reports that quoted a top commander in Iran's Revolutionary Guard as saying Tehran will not negotiate with the United States: "We are responding to credible intelligence reports that Iran was actively plotting attacks against American interests and our partners in the region." "And so we put in place a bunch of measures to be ready to defend ourselves if attacked. We are not looking for war...What we are making clear though is that we will defend ourselves if attacked with military force," he said.

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/brian-hook-interview/4913169.html>

VOA Russian interviewed U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD), author of the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, who together with Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), on the fifth anniversary of Russian opposition leader Boris Nemstov's assassination, announced a resolution condemning Russia's practice of politically motivated imprisonment and calling for the release of political prisoners in Russia. "The brazen assassination of Boris Nemstov is a reminder that all free people must stand up against those who would deny freedoms and basic rights to others," Senator Cardin said.

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/ben-cardin-nemtsov-resolution-interview/5307073.html>

VOA Russian interviewed Rep. Tom Malinowski (D-NJ) on H.Res 156, passed by the House Foreign Affairs Committee, calling for justice for the assassination of Boris Nemtsov and investigation into foreign assets of Chechen strongman Ramzan Kadyrov. The congressman made clear which countries he wants to see scrutinized above all: the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. "This is the first time that we are publicly drawing attention to Kadyrov's business ties to Saudi Arabia and the UAE":

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/tom-malinovsky-interview/4821194.html>

VOA Russian interviewed U.S. Senator Ben Cardin, who as part of a bipartisan group of 11 senators called on the U.S. Departments of State and Treasury to issue a new round of sanctions under the Magnitsky Act over Russia's targeting of political dissidents within its own borders.

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/ben-cardin/5109437.html>

VOA Russian interviewed Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS), Co-Chair of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the U.S. Helsinki Commission, on Russia's clear track record of reckless disregard for its international obligations, armed aggression against Ukraine.

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/russia-osce-discussion/2851648.html>

VOA Russian interviewed Rep. Tom Malinowski (D-NJ) on the latest steps by Russian authorities restricting media freedom: "I think this is another sign of how much Putin fears his fellow citizens. This is not a law against "foreign agents" – it is a law against Russians who share information about life in their own country, seek the truth about their country, and try to communicate this truth."

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/dg-interview-with-tom-malinovsky/5195933.html>

VOA Russian interviewed Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL) during the latest NATO London ministerial on the alliance, which he said has remained steadfast in its mission to provide security for all its members, and that it must continue to be that guarantee for future generations. As a member of Congress and co-chair of the House Baltic Caucus, he encouraged and supported NATO enlargement as a critical strategic step to aide new democracies throughout Eastern Europe, including Ukraine and Georgia. <https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/shimkus-interview/5189962.html>

VOA Russian interview with Rep. William Keating (D-MA), member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and House Armed Services Committee, on problems in relations between the United States, NATO and Turkey, and on U.S. citizen Paul Whelan, accused by Russia of espionage and detained in Moscow jail since December 2018.

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/keating-interview/5205406.html>

VOA Russian interview with Kiron Skinner, then-head of Policy Planning at the State Department, about President Trump's foreign policy and his priorities in regards to NATO, Russia, Ukraine, China and other regional issues: "The United States under Donald Trump imposed much more sanctions against Russia than it did under previous presidents, especially over Ukraine.

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/kiron-skinner-statedept-interview/4868794.html>

The VOA Eurasia Division's impactful coverage marking the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall featured an exclusive interview with former U.S. secretary of state James Baker, who played a pivotal role in the historic event. He told VOA the greatest threat to democracy today is the rise of authoritarianism, and that VOA played an important role in galvanizing public support for democracy. The interview was used by all of the Eurasia services and shared house-wide, including

with VOA English, and figured prominently in VOA's *Plugged in with Greta Van Susteren*, in the episode entitled *Berlin Wall: 30 Years After the Fall*.
<https://www.voanews.com/episode/ex-secretary-state-baker-rise-authoritarianism-greatest-threat-democracy-4083201>
<https://www.voanews.com/episode/berlin-wall-30-years-after-fall-4084131> (*Plugged In*: start TC 16:56)

VOA Russian conducted an exclusive interview with former U.S. Ambassador to Russia John Tefft on U.S.-Russia relations and measures offered by the United States to improve ties. According to the ambassador, "The best way to respond to misinformation is to tell the story truthfully."
<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/john-tefft-interview/4025656.html>

VOA Russian interviews with Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD), Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, U.S. Helsinki Commission Chairman, marked the fifth anniversary of Boris Nemtsov's murder and focused on Moscow protests:
<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/ben-cardin-nemtsov-resolution-interview/5307073.html>
<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/ben-cardin/5109437.html>

VOA Ukrainian traveled with then-U.S. special representative Kurt Volker on his trip to the east of Ukraine in May 2018, providing exclusive firsthand coverage of the trip. "All living here, all say that the most important thing is peace and that the territory needs to be restored to Ukraine," Volker said.
<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/1953605088007532/>

Senator Ron Johnson focused on the role of the United States in the Ukrainian peace process. "Certainly America needs to be involved in the peace process, but as President Trump constantly says – Ukraine is more of a European issue," the senator emphasized.
<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/1348194268702252/>

In an exclusive interview with VOA Ukrainian, Senator Richard Durbin spoke about the importance of U.S. security assistance to Ukraine.
<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/752499591930233/>

Senator Chris Murphy talked about U.S.-Ukraine relations in an exclusive interview with VOA's Ukrainian Service:
<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/2701409123257197/>

Reps. D. Mark Quigley, Brian Fitzpatrick and Marcy Kaptur talked to VOA Ukrainian about unfreezing defense assistance to Ukraine:
<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/366625647546964/>
<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/415000352487194/>

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Laura Cooper detailed the conditions for U.S. defense assistance to Ukraine and commented on Ukraine's defense reform in an exclusive interview with VOA Ukrainian:
<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/2280259635596033/>

U.S. Deputy Senior Director for Europe John Erath on the U.S. National Security Council told VOA Albanian that the United States will be actively involved in Serbia-Kosovo talks. The interview

coincided with the 20th anniversary of the end of hostilities in Kosovo, after a U.S.-led NATO military intervention against Serbia.

<https://www.zeriamerikes.com/a/4949984.html>

VOA Albanian interviewed U.S. Senator Ron Johnson, member of the Foreign Relations Committee, on Serbia-Kosovo talks. Senator Johnson told VOA Albanian that the United States will be actively involved in helping Kosovo and Serbia reach a final agreement to their old animosities.

<https://www.zeriamerikes.com/a/us-kosovo-senator-johnson/4564051.html>

VOA Albanian conducted a joint interview with Representatives Peter Roskam (R-IL), House Democracy Partnership (HDP) Chairman, and David Price (D-NC), who led a bipartisan delegation from the U.S. House of Representatives in Kosovo. The delegation arrived in Kosovo on its Independence Day, in order to reiterate the strong bipartisan support for Kosovo in the U.S. Congress.

<https://www.zeriamerikes.com/a/us-congress-kosovo/3730750.html>

Congressman Eliot Engel, Chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, in an interview with VOA's Albanian Service, reiterates that he is against the change of borders between Serbia and Kosovo. The co-chair of the Albanian Issues Caucus in the House also said he will do his best to help Albania and Kosovo in their path to Euro-integration.

<https://www.zeriamerikes.com/a/engel-kosovo/5170784.html>

VOA Armenian interview with Congressman Adam Schiff (D-CA) on Armenian Genocide recognition as well as strengthening U.S.-Armenian relations:

<https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/3742522.html>

<https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/5144419.html>

<https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/5356000.html>

Representative Judy Chu (D-CA) discusses with the Armenian Service the importance of strengthening peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan:

<https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/3836200.html>

Representative Jackie Speier (D-CA) in interviews with VOA Armenian often recalls her Armenian roots and talked about the importance of leveling-up bilateral U.S.-Armenian cooperation to a strategic partnership (which was implemented in 2019).

LINK: <https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/4031172.html>

LINK: <https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/4841003.html>

Representative Anthony Brindisi (D-NY) talked with VOA Armenian about the unique nature of the U.S. elections as well as his Armenian roots.

LINK: <https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/4556635.html>

Congressman Frank Pallone (D-NJ), who co-chairs the Armenian Caucus, talked to VOA Armenian about peace in the South Caucasus region and U.S. interests in Armenia.

LINK: <https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/5012443.html>

LINK: <https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/5111948.html>

LINK: <https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/5145033.html>

VOA Bosnian interviewed Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS) on how important it is for the Bosnian people to recognize and fight rampant political corruption in their country, saying Bosnia's ethnic

diversity should be its strength and something to celebrate - like in the United States - instead of a source of friction and an obstacle to progress.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/wicker-vrijeme-je-za-21-vijek/4500595.html>

Bosnian Service interview with Congressman Scott Perry (R-PA):

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/kongresmen-perry-o-stanju-u-bih-neko-mora-ustati-i-rci--to-nije-prihvatljivo/5216537.html>

Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ):

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/americki-kongresmen-chris-smith-proglasen-pocasnim-gradjaninom-sarajeva/4797077.html>

The Bosnian Service's interview with Congressman Andre Carson (D-IN), a member of the Bosnian Caucus, focused on the political impasse in Bosnia, as well as the congressional investigation into allegations of Russian collusion.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/andree-carson-kongresmen-intervju/3872525.html>

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary Matthew Palmer talked to VOA Bosnian in an exclusive interview following a recent visit to the Balkans, saying the country needs to implement reforms if it wants to integrate into European and Euro-Atlantic structures and make progress toward EU membership.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/4351970.html>

Minnesota Attorney General and former congressman Keith Ellison talked to VOA's Bosnian Service as the first American Muslim in the Congress. He talks about his Islamic faith, being an African American in politics, and about how the United States, Bosnia and the world should fight against Islamic radicalism.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/keith-ellison/2508457.html>

Benjamin Hodges, retired U.S. Army officer who served as commanding general, United States Army Europe, told VOA Georgian Russia is doing everything it can to gain full control of the Black Sea region and set up a new Iron Curtain. He said Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are behind this curtain.

<https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/interview-with-ltg-ben-hodges/5004191.html>

Daniel Fried, one of the longest-serving researchers in the Atlantic Council, spoke to VOA's Georgian Service about political polarization, Georgia-Russia relations, and the threats facing the country.

<https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/daniel-freed-interview/5123288.html>

Senator James Risch (R-ID), Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, talked about U.S.-Georgia relations, telling VOA Georgian the Georgian government has promised the United States it would fulfil its promises to the opposition and meet expectations set in a bilateral agreement.

<https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/voa-exclusive-interview-with-senator-risch/5274451.html>

In an interview with VOA's Georgian Service, Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-IL) urged the Georgian government to fulfil its promises and accomplish reforms.

<https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/interview-adam-kinzinger/5430482.html>

Former U.S. national security adviser Steve Hadley spoke to VOA Georgian on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Georgia-Russia war and today's occupation of Georgia by Russia.

<https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/interview-with-steve-hadley/4499823.html>

VOA Macedonian's exclusive interview with the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Committee James Risch regarding the crucial Senate vote that enabled North Macedonia's NATO membership:
<https://mk.voanews.com/a/senator-risch-james-protocol-nato-/4931292.html>

Macedonian Service covered a rare official meeting between a Balkan official, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and President Trump in the Oval Office, who discussed the Prespa Agreement:
<https://mk.voanews.com/a/white-house-mitsotakis-macedonia-greece-us-/5237074.html>

Serbian Service interview with Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Palmer on U.S. assistance to Western Balkan countries in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic:
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/metju-palmer-za-glas-amerike-posle-pobede-nad-virusom-brzi-povratak-gradjanskim-slobodama/5372543.html>

Serbian Service interview with U.S. Congressmen Tad Poe (R-TX) and Steve Stivers (R-OH), members of the Serbian Congressional Caucus, on U.S. policy toward Serbia and U.S.-Serbian relations:
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/kongresmeni-po-i-stajvers-amerika-%C5%BEeli-da-pomoqne-u-dijaloqu/4707985.html>

Serbian Service interview with U.S. Ambassador to Serbia Anthony Godfrey (via Skype) on U.S. assistance to Serbia during the coronavirus pandemic:
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/intervju-sa-ameri%C4%8Dkim-ambasadorom-u-srbiji/5367411.html>

Serbian Service interview with Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Matthew Palmer (via Skype) on U.S. views on the Serbian opposition's planned boycott of the country's upcoming parliamentary elections:
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/palmer-za-glas-amerike-o-izborima-u-srbiji/5438062.html>

Serbian Service interview with Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI), chair of the Senate Europe Subcommittee, on the appointment of Richard Grenell, U.S. Ambassador to Germany, as the White House Special Envoy for the Serbia Kosovo talks:
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/senator-d%C5%BEonson-za-glas-amerike-o-re%C5%A1avanju-pitanja-kosova/5137600.html>

Serbian Service interview with Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) on U.S. policy toward the Western Balkans and Russia's influence:
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/kadrin-za-glas-amerike-put-za-balkan-zapad-a-ne-rusija/4077803.html>

Serbian Service interview with Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI), chair of the Senate Europe Subcommittee, on Russia's destabilizing activities in the Western Balkans and the need to oppose them:
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/senator-dzonson-rusija-destabilizuje-region-sad-da-obrae-pazniu/3901857.html>

Serbian Service interview with the late Senator John McCain (R-AZ), then-chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, on the need for the United States to re-engage and be more present in the Western Balkans in order to oppose malignant Russian influence.
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/intervju-mekein/3826776.html>

Serbian Service interview with then-deputy assistant secretary of state Hoyt Yee on U.S. policy toward Montenegro and support for its NATO membership bid:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/hojt-brajan-ji-protokol-ratifikacija/3678444.html>

LATIN AMERICA DIVISION

Mike Pompeo, U.S. Secretary of State, talks to VOA about relations between the United States and Latin America, the Venezuelan crisis, aid from the U.S. to Venezuelan refugees, the situation on the southern border and the influence of China in the region – Paraguay, April 2019.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/la-voz-de-america-entrevista-mike-pompeo-39960>

Mike Pompeo, U.S. Secretary of State, says it is the weaknesses of the president of the government in dispute, Nicolás Maduro, that "will finally lead him to his departure" and thanks to this, "democracy and prosperity will be restored in Venezuela" – Buenos Aires, December 2018:

<https://www.voanoticias.com/estadosunidos/entrevista-de-mike-pompeo-la-voz-de-america-sobre-venezuela>

Wilbur Ross, U.S. Secretary of Commerce, during the Summit of the Americas held in Lima, Peru, highlights the importance of trade relations between the United States and Latin America.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/estadosunidos/voa-entrevista-secretario-comercio-wilbur-ross>

The head of the United States Southern Command, Admiral Craig Faller, explains what the activities that Iran is developing in Venezuela mean with the shipment of oil tanks and the interest he has in controlling the Latin American region.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/portada/eeuu-preocupado-por-intereses-iran-en-america-latina>

Helen Aguirre Ferré, White House Director of Media Affairs, talks about President Trump's goals at the Nuclear Summit in Singapore in June 2018.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/desnuclearizacion-acuerdodopez-coreadelnorte-donaldtrump-kimjongun-cumbrenuclear>

Elliot Abrams, U.S. Special Envoy for Venezuela, warns the government in dispute of Nicolás Maduro that it would be a "fatal error" and the "reaction would be serious" if he allows the presence of Hezbollah in Venezuela.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/ee-uu-advierde-maduro-que-seria-error-fatal-permitir-expansion-de-hezbollah-en-venezuela>

Carlos Trujillo, U.S. Ambassador for OAS, says violators of human rights in Venezuela will not escape from the international justice.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/venezuela-360-162952>

Kevin O'Reilly, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, talks to VOA about U.S. policy towards the region.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/ee-uu-evo-morales-no-debe-volver-la-pol%C3%ADtica-en-bolivia-162630>

James Story, U.S. Chargé D'Affaires for Venezuela, talks about U.S. sanctions to Venezuela.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/jamesstory-adriananunez-venezuela-venezuela360-visas-union europea-183242>

Tod Robinson, U.S. Chargé d' Affaires for Venezuela, from the U.S. Embassy in Caracas, warns Nicolás Maduro that his country "has all the options on the table," if the elections that the Venezuelan president called for are held on May 20, 2018.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/todd-robinson-voz-america-alvaro-algarra-elecciones-nicolas-maduro-sanciones-42110>

Michael Fitzpatrick, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs (2017), says the United States does not rule out sanctions against Maduro government.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/eeuu-entrevista-fitzpatrick-venezuela-sanciones-esfuerzos-multilaterales>

John Piechowski, Deputy Assistant Secretary overseeing public diplomacy in the Bureau of the Western Hemisphere, says some people close to the Maduro government are interested in U.S. proposals to promote political change in Venezuela.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/archivo/sobre-aliados-de-maduro-ee-uu-dice-que-hay-interes-en-plan-de-transicion>

Mauricio Claver-Carone, Senior Director of the NSC for Western Hemisphere Affairs, explains the new White House policy toward Venezuela.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/asesor-del-presidente-trump-maduro-debe-estudiar-bien-esta-gran-oportunidad-venezuela>

John Barsa, Acting USAID Administrator, discusses humanitarian aid to Venezuela.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/portada/usaid-denuncia-obstaculos-nicolas-maduro-para-ingresar-ayuda-venezuela>

Morgan Ortagus, spokesperson for the Department of State, denounces the Venezuelan government for offering a safe haven to Hezbollah.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/archivo/eeuu-advierde-existe-refugio-seguro-para-hezbollah-en-venezuela>

Senator Rick Scott (R-FL), describes the steps that, according to him, the United States should follow to impose greater pressure on the Nicolás Maduro government in Venezuela.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/venezuela-scott-maduro-guaido-39652>

Senator Robert Menéndez (D-NJ), the highest-ranking Democratic senator on the Foreign Relations Committee, assured that Russia seeks to destabilize the hemisphere through Venezuela and Nicaragua.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/robert-menendez-entrevista-voa-rusia-nicaragua-venezuela-inmigracion-desestabilizacion>

Representative Debbie Mucarsel-Powell (D-FL), says the Venezuelan Caucus created in the U.S. capital will be an important platform to discuss a temporary protective status (TPS) for Venezuelans living in United States.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/caucus-por-una-venezuela-democratica-ya-entró-en-acción-162673>

Representative Donna Shalala (D-FL) tells VOA U.S. sanctions "must go deeper," so Nicolás Maduro understands. Shalala said "there is no difference between this administration and the leadership of the Democratic Party" on Venezuela.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/shalala-nuestras-sanciones-deben-ir-m%C3%A1s-profundo-para-que-maduro-entienda-39292>

Representative Henry Cuellar (D-TX) says the Chinese presence in Latin America "is growing."
<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/cuellar-debemos-tratar-paises-de-centroamerica-como-vecinos-155505>

Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL) explains the United States' international campaign to pressure the Venezuelan government and promote democracy in the country.
<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/v360-mario-diaz-balart-plantea-opciones-venezolanos-en-ee-uu>

Representative Pete Olson (R-TX), discusses the campaign he is working on to release six U.S. citizens – all executives of the Citgo Oil Company – imprisoned in Venezuela.
<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/venezuela-360-congresista-de-eeuu-lucha-por-libertad-de-los-6-de-citgo-191813>

PERSIAN DIVISION

Brian Hook, U.S. special envoy for Iran, on new sanctions on Iran (December 2018):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1wZUg2t9vU>

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHY5KFYds1A>

U.S. Senator James Risch (R-ID):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFCESl4wu5g>
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-iran-risch-205771>

Makan Delrahim, Assistant Attorney General, Antitrust Division, U.S. Department of Justice:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTL03epIfDA>

Rudy Giuliani, former mayor of New York City and lawyer for President Trump (October 2016):
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-iran-guliani-23185>

Congressman Lee Zeldin (R-NY) (November 2017):
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-iran-228154>

David Peyman, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Counter Threat Finance and Sanctions, on U.S. sanctions policy toward Iran, Venezuela and Russia (March 2019):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GpPKUNVxMDU>

Congressman Scott Perry (R-PA) (September 2019):
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-iran-scott-perry-213878>

Congressman Doug Lamborn (R-CO) (December 2017):
<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/nskhh-kaml-gftgwy-akhtsasy-sday-amryka-ba-dag-lmbrn-dw-kmyth-nyrwhay-mslh-mjls-nmayndgan>

State Department Spokesperson Morgan Ortagus:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LY8JVA8G41A>

SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA DIVISION

Turkish President Erdogan during his last visit to Washington, D.C., in 2019 met President Trump and five Republican senators at the White House. Among these senators was James Risch, Foreign Relations Committee Chairman. VOA Turkish interviewed Senator Risch after the meeting.
<https://www.amerikaninsezi.com/a/s-400-konusunda-yolun-sonuna-gelindi/5201356.html>

VOA Turkish interviewed Ambassador Nathan Sales, the U.S. *State Department's* Counterterrorism Bureau Coordinator, on the defeat of ISIS and how the captured foreign ISIS fighters would be kept.
<https://www.amerikaninsezi.com/a/%C4%B1sid-mucadele-suriye-teror-yabanci-terorist/4843041.html>

VOA Turkish interviewed Congressman Al Green on his views about how Turkish-American community would be more pro-active in US politics.
<https://www.amerikaninsezi.com/a/kongre-uyesi-al-green-arzum-bir-turk-amerikaliji-abd-baskani-gormek/3782206.html>

Former CIA director Michael Hayden told VOA Turkish the importance of Turkey's cooperation with the United States on the future of Kurds in the aftermath of Syrian war and changes in Iraq.
<https://www.amerikaninsezi.com/a/eski-cia-baskani-hayden-ozerk-bir-kurdistan-ankaraya-anlatmaliz/4163993.html>

VOA Turkish interviewed Rep. Gerry Connolly at a rally for slain journalist Jamal Khashoggi in front of the Washington Post building.
<https://www.amerikaninsezi.com/a/kongre-uyesi-connolly-cemal-kasikci-konusunda-sessiz-kalamayiz/4609489.html>

VOA Turkish interviewed former CIA director Leon Panetta on Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi's killing.
<https://www.amerikaninsezi.com/a/eski-cia-direktoru-kasikci-olayini-voa-turkceye-degerlendirdi/4624361.html>

Interview with Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison, U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yV7rinYxGIw&list=PLbkPdGUPHutchison,%20GeneralbugDEV>

Interview with Pete Buttigieg, Democratic candidate for the U.S. 2020 presidential election:
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=606008583555647>

Interview with former CIA director General David Petraeus:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxYrFvP_7r8

Interview with Tadamichi Yamamoto, U.S. special representative for Afghanistan:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEJTakkSH5c&app=desktop>

Interview with [Nancy Pelosi](#), Speaker of the House:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSDMuAIWyp4&t=108s>

Exclusive interview with the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, General John Nicholson:
<https://www.darivoa.com/a/general-nicholson-nato-us-afghanistan-taliban-pakistan-iran-russia/3719362.html?nocache=1>

Interview with Rep. Michael Waltz (R-MN):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apix1guDlr0>

Interview with Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgUz_Qly9dY

Interview with Ambassador Marc Grossman, former U.S. special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VfZIMsUpxa0>

Interview with Timothy West, former advisor to Vice President Biden:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76WaxW36Tts>

Interview with Jared Blanc, former acting special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IiKLF-11vMk>

Interview with Ambassador David Sedney, former deputy assistant secretary for Afghanistan:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h08lXpXN5AA>

Interview with Ambassador Earl Wayne, former deputy ambassador to Afghanistan:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUj4SgBX5pk>

Republican Congressman Ted Poe in an exclusive interview calls for declaring Pakistan a state sponsoring terrorism:

<https://www.voadeewanews.com/a/us-pakistan-terrorism/3725966.html>

Interview with John L. Dorrian, spokesman of the U.S. military in Iraq:

<https://www.dengeamerika.com/a/john-l-dorrian/3704982.html?nocache=1>

Interview with visiting U.S. National Security Advisor [John Bolton](#) about sanctions against Iran, security in the South Caucasus, Nagorno-Karabakh peace talks and human rights:

<https://www.amerikaninsesi.org/a/siyasi/4628490.html>

Interview with Evan Feigenbaum, former deputy assistant secretary of state, on U.S.-Uzbek relations:

<https://www.amerikaovozi.com/a/5270216.html>

Interview with U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan Daniel Rosenblum:

<https://www.amerikaovozi.com/a/5115915.html>

PRESS FREEDOM

"A Free Press Matters" – this is the VOA motto that reflects the Agency's longstanding mission. VOA strives to promote, support and model press freedom, a basic human right that is under attack in many countries around the world. Threats against journalists, censorship, and shutting down media outlets due to lack of funding and threats from violence and organized crime are some of the challenges faced by journalists. VOA journalists are dedicated to covering stories about press freedom, reporting and coordinating projects among VOA's 48 language services. Besides content for radio, television, web and social media, the entire Agency has gone through a rebranding process in which "A Free Press Matters" is now part of its brand/look on all platforms. This effort reflects VOA's role as a model for independent, fact-based and balanced journalism.

NEWS CENTER

A Win Against Impunity Slovak journalists rallied when a colleague was killed. They changed their country.

<https://projects.voanews.com/kuciak/>

Investigative Journalist Pays the Price for Expose in India

<https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/investigative-journalist-pays-price-expose-india>

Redlining the News in Pakistan

<https://www.voanews.com/press-freedom/redlining-news-pakistan>

COVID-19: The hit on Press Freedom

<https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-hit-press-freedom>

Covering COVID-19 Risk and Reporting at the Pandemic's Front Line

<https://projects.voanews.com/covering-covid19/>

Trump's VOA criticism shows U.S.-funded news doesn't mean U.S.-approved

<https://www.voanews.com/press-freedom/trumps-voa-criticism-shows-us-funded-news-doesnt-mean-us-approved>

Reporter's notebook: "No Hun Sen. I do not work for Washington. I am an Independent Journalist"

<https://www.voanews.com/press-freedom/reporters-notebook-no-hun-sen-i-do-not-work-washington-i-am-independent-journalist>

VOA Films Illegal Logging inside Mexico Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/voa-films-illegal-logging-inside-mexico-monarch-butterfly-sanctuary-4273441>

Kidnapped, Blindfolded, Tossed in Jail: An Azerbaijani Reporter's exclusive tale

<https://www.voanews.com/press-freedom/kidnapped-blindfolded-tossed-jail-azerbaijani-reporters-exclusive-tale>

Reporter's Notebook: Let us Cheer for Golunov, but keep no illusions

<https://www.voanews.com/press-freedom/reporters-notebook-let-us-cheer-golunov-keep-no-illusions>

Iranian's angry response to plane crash cover-up widens split in state media

<https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/voa-news-iran/iranians-angry-response-plane-crash-cover-widens-split-state-media>

Collaboration with USAGM entities – The Fight for Press Freedom: This project highlights coverage of journalists, news media and the global environment for press freedom as reported by USAGM sister news organizations.

<https://pressfreedom.news/>

AFRICA DIVISION

VOA journalist caught in crossfire during protests over the death of George Floyd.

<https://www.voanews.com/press-freedom/voa-journalist-says-police-fired-toward-press-protesters-dc> (English)

VOA report on being a journalist in Somalia, part of World Press Freedom Day coverage.

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/being-journalist-risky-business-somalia> (Somali)

VOA's Peter Clotney was part of the U.S. Speaker program for World Press Freedom Day organized by the Bureau of International Information Programs at the U.S. Department of State. The interactive discussion, focused on the role of media in elections, was streamed live on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/StateDRI/videos/203962027153545/> (English)

VOA Africa produced the Press Freedom series of TV commercials for use across VOA.

<https://youtu.be/foWmBIXEAeA>

Tanzanian Ambassador Wilson Masilingi joined Member of Parliament Tundu Lissu in a lively debate about freedoms of expression on VOA TV in English and Swahili. Lissu was shot 16 times during a 2017 assassination attempt and blames the government.

<https://www.facebook.com/VOAStraightTalkAfrica/videos/2218606191522957/> (English)

<https://www.voaswahili.com/a/4777032.html> (Swahili)

"I have paid the price for democracy and I believe, at the end of the day, democracy will win," Ethiopian journalist Eskinder Nega told VOA Amharic following his release from more than six years in prison. Nega has been jailed nine times by Ethiopian authorities, each detention covered extensively by VOA.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOEVp8AQpSM> (English)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRoiuKs4Tck> (Amharic)

VOA was the first to report on an Eritrean journalist jailed for six years in a story cited by The Committee to Protect Journalists.

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/eritrea-jailed-journalists-continue-languish>

Following is a link to the report on conditions for the media in South Sudan, as part of World Press Freedom Day coverage:

<https://www.facebook.com/UpfrontshowVOA/videos/1931217520246316/>

Freelance cameraman Ali Nur Siad was working for VOA when he was killed in a bombing. Local stringer Abdulkadir Mohamed Abdulle was injured and evacuated to Turkey.

<https://www.usagm.gov/news-and-information/threats-to-press/ali-nur-siad/>

"He chose to bear witness; he chose to look unflinchingly at what was painful and to find the humanity within it," Joyce Krajian, mother of U.S. journalist Christopher Allen killed in South Sudan, told VOA Africa.

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/family-mourns-death-reporter-who-chose-bear-witness>

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC DIVISION

In August 2019, unrest erupted in Indonesia's easternmost provinces of Papua and West Papua – provinces have been wrought in the history of violence for more than 50 years. The indigenous people have not stopped fighting for independence, and the Indonesian government is stepping up military presence in many pockets of the region. With the issues being so contentious and divisive, any reporting done on the region is faced with suspicion and often intimidation from all sides. The internet was also shut down to throttle the flow of information and slow down the spread of protests. The Indonesian Service is set to take a deeper look at the issues around press freedom in Papua – something that does not get reported by the Indonesian media. The reporting calls attention to the challenges faced by the local, national and international press to get to the truth on Papuan issues in a documentary and multimedia series under a project called "[Bebas Tak Bebas Papua](#)."

Special Press Freedom Page (Ongoing): This is a collection of past and ongoing VOA Khmer's coverage of press freedom in Cambodia and around the world in Khmer language.

<https://khmer.voanews.com/p/7013.html>

A Glimmer of Hope for Online News in Cambodia (December 2019): This VOA Khmer enterprise story looks at [Voice of Democracy](#), one of the very few independent media in Cambodia that survived the government crackdown, in the run-up to the 2018 elections. Through its now digitalized Roundtable show, the story looks at the challenges that the traditional radio broadcaster is facing in a post-crackdown digital media world.

Prey Veng Residents Still Keen on News Broadcasts, Albeit Discreetly (October 2019): Years after the crackdown of the media, a village in Prey Veng province, where rural Cambodians are dealing with an unusual predicament – stay away from the news and remain safe or listen to critical news broadcasts and risk being labelled an opposition supporter. Other series of stories under [Radio Silence](#) reported by VOA Khmer reporters from the countryside.

Cambodian Reporters' Legal Limbo Traumatizes Their Families (October 2019): This enterprise report [follows eight-year-old Yeang Socheata](#) to tell the story of how the ongoing trials of Yeang Sothearin, 36, and Uon Chhin, 50, [two former Radio Free Asia reporters](#) arrested in Cambodia in November 2017, has negatively impacted their families and livelihood.

Journalists Behind Prison Bars in Cambodia (May 2019): Ahead of International Press Freedom Day, journalists in Cambodia spoke to VOA Khmer about working in an environment of [intimidation, harassment and fear of arrest](#). Two former Radio Free Asia reporters were arrested and put in jail because they continued to report stories after RFA's office in Phnom Penh was closed. The arrest has drawn national and internal criticism toward the government that it has tried to clamp down on the freedom of the press.

VOA Burmese covers George Washington University Forum on World Press Freedom.

<https://burmese.voanews.com/a/world-press-freedom-/3836000.html>

EURASIA DIVISION

VOA Russian's report on the freedom of press in Chechnya focused on the most egregious case of violation of press freedom in Russia – Chechnya Governor Ramzan Kadyrov's public threats against Russian journalist Elena Milashina and her paper *Novaya Gazeta*, which were readily dismissed by the Kremlin. Kadyrov's verbal attack on *Novaya Gazeta* is the latest in a long history of local authorities' threats and attacks on journalists and human rights defenders exposing abuses in Russia and Chechnya. The report featured Milashina, *Novaya Gazeta* editor-in-chief Dmitry Muratov, Human Rights Watch Russia Program Director Tatiana Lokshina, and former RFE/RL and NPR journalist Gregory Feifer.

<https://www.voanews.com/press-freedom/chechnya-message-press-clear-journalists-are-not-welcome-or-safe>
<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/chechnya-danger-for-journalists/5396793.html>

VOA Russian's Alexei Gorbachev interviewed two former members of the Russian Duma. Ilya Ponomarev, a former member of the Russian parliament in exile and the only one who voted against the annexation of Crimea in 2014, spoke about the situation with the Russian newspaper *Vedomosti*. It was the last big newspaper in Russia with an independent editorial board. Ponomarev revealed that Putin's associates changed the editor there because of *Vedomosti's* criticism of the role of Russian oil company Rosneft (with close ties to Putin) in the current economic crisis in Russia. Dmytri Gudkov, also a former member of the Duma, shared his thoughts on new laws and restrictions – "siloviki," or secret services – in Russia used to oppress human rights when people are panicking because of COVID-19.

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/5401351.html>

VOA Ukrainian's report on the protection of journalist sources in the United States featured exclusive interviews with Alexandra Ellerbeck of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and Yahoo Chief Investigative Correspondent Michael Isikoff. "Protection of sources is vital for a journalist," Ellerbeck told VOA. Her comments were echoed by Isikoff, who gave a nuanced explanation of the difference between a journalist transferring information voluntarily to help an investigation vs. a situation when the information is requested, for instance to prosecute a leaker.

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/1528572843957636/>

How Russian TV distorts information on the fight against coronavirus in the United States:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/russian-tv-covid-disinformation/5395951.html>

VOA Ukrainian reported on a rally held in New York City in support of Russian political prisoner from Crimea Oleg Sentsov and other political prisoners. The FreeSentsov protest action united numerous activists in the U.S. and internationally.

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/1968390486528992/>

VOA Albanian held a Facebook live roundtable discussion about the challenges COVID-19 poses for journalism around the world with four panelists – two from the United States and one each from Albania and Kosovo. They highlighted the dangers to freedom of the press and freedom of expression posed by the tendency of leaders to accumulate power and suffocate public discourse in the name of fighting the virus. They identified as main issues the changing landscape, the professional and personal burden, and the financial insecurity that reporters face in covering the pandemic.

<https://www.facebook.com/zeriamerikes/videos/565460437408472/>

VOA Bosnian's documentary series about press freedom in Bosnia vs. in the United States:

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/kontic-javni-mediji-prave-laznu-realnost-malo-novinara-pita-kljucna-pitanja-/4902157.html>

Bosnian Service investigative report on murder of Slovak journalist Jan Kucina.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/pobjeda-protiv-nekaznjivosti-ubistvo-koje-je-promijenilo-slovacku/5401062.html>

Bosnian Service examines how lack of media freedom and threats to journalists help authoritarian governments.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/sloboda-medija-ubijanje-terorisanje-i-uznemiravanje-novinara-su-klju%C4%8Dni-za-uspon-autoritarizma/5399139.html>

Bosnian Service report on Russian propaganda in the Balkans through privately owned media.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/ruski-narativ-na-zapadnom-balkanu/4971127.html>
<https://ba.voanews.com/p/7163.html>

VOA Georgian report on threats to global democracy, including press freedom:

<https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/democracy-in-times-of-pandemic/5370608.html>

VOA Georgian report on threats to press freedom when authoritarianism is on the rise, featuring an interview with Lee Edwards, director of Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation:

<https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/intevrview-with-lee-edwards/5315115.html>

VOA Georgian interview with Adrian Shahbaz, research director at Freedom House, on internet freedoms around the world:

<https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/freedom-house-new-report-the-rise-of-digital-authoritarianism/4637313.html>

VOA Georgian stringer reports on walls for media outlets in conflict zones:

<https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/conflict-zone-media-chorchana-gugutiantkari-occupation-georgia/5443331.html>

VOA's Macedonian Service explains the lack of interest in journalism in North Macedonia, where it is seen as a threat to democracy. The report features an interview with Barbara Cochran, director of the Washington Program at the Missouri School of Journalism.

<https://mk.voanews.com/a/journalists-macedonia-/5153487.htm>

<https://www.voanews.com/press-freedom/lack-interest-journalism-seen-threat-democracy-north-macedonia> (English)

VOA Serbian interview with Serbian Journalist Milan Jovanovic, whose house was set on fire because of his articles probing corruption schemes of the municipality manager in a town close to the Serbian capital Belgrade, on the state of press freedoms in Serbia:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/sloboda-medija-u-srbiji-milan-jovanovi%C4%87/5402412.html>

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/vasington-novinari-nagrada-ronald-regan/5155997.html>

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/vasington-novinari-nagrada-ronald-regan/5155997.html>

Serbian Service interview with Jason Rezaian, prominent *Washington Post* journalist, who was imprisoned in Iran for almost two years, on the state of media freedoms around the world:
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/dzejison-rezajan-intervju-dan-slobod-medija/5401590.html>

The Courageous Ones – Serbian Service reporter Milan Nestic's 45-minute TV documentary exploring different aspects of the status of media and journalists in Serbia under the increasingly repressive policies of President Aleksandar Vucic:
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/hrabri-dokumentarac-srbija-mediji/5203318.html>

[Report on various forms of attacks on independent journalists and media in Serbia, part of a documentary series on the status of media in Serbia:](https://www.facebook.com/pg/otvorenistudio/videos/?ref=page_internal)
https://www.facebook.com/pg/otvorenistudio/videos/?ref=page_internal

Report on the challenges of independent and investigative journalists in Serbia, who often receive top international prizes and awards but face an increasingly oppressive and media-unfriendly atmosphere at home, part of a series on the status of media in Serbia:
<https://www.facebook.com/otvorenistudio/videos/10155721827181325/>

Report on the threats and repressive measures against the independent local media in Serbia, part of a documentary series on the status of media in Serbia:
<https://www.facebook.com/otvorenistudio/videos/10155735687316325/>

Report on attacks of pro-government tabloids and other media in Serbia on independent journalists and media, part of a documentary series on the status of media in Serbia:
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/ucestao-medijski-linc-provladinih-medija-na-nezavisne-novinare/4227755.html>

[The Serbian opposition offers a proposal for improved status of the media:](https://www.glasamerike.net/a/opozicija-iznela-preporuke-za-izmene-u-oblasti-medija-i-regularnosti-izbora/4944023.html)
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/opozicija-iznela-preporuke-za-izmene-u-oblasti-medija-i-regularnosti-izbora/4944023.html>

Analytical report on the eroding status of media freedoms in Serbia:
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/povratak-u-devedesete-na-medijskoj-sceni-srbije/4662061.html>

LATIN AMERICA DIVISION

Foro Weekly News Magazine: Press manipulation and censorship during the pandemic: While the numbers of people affected by the coronavirus continue to rise, some civilian and press groups have questioned the data provided by governments. The political management of COVID-19 presents a serious threat to the fundamentals of freedom of press.
<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/foro-interamericano-prensa-manipulación-y-censura-durante-pandemia-201856>

Venezuela: How is the pandemic reinforcing the power of the State? VOA interviewed experts who analyze how the pandemic exacerbated the lack of rights in Venezuela.
<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/la-furia-bolivariana-en-tiempo-de-pandemia-arrestos-persecucion-y-abusos-en-venezuela>
<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/autoritarismo-en-medio-de-la-pandemia-197394> (TV)

Latin American women in the media March 2020: Women's movements and feminist activism, among other reasons, have encouraged the media to incorporate in their newsrooms the figure of gender editor or, in some cases, diversity.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/america-latina/periodismo-genero-diversidad-agenda-informativa-medios>

World Press Freedom Day Multimedia special, May 2019: During World Press Freedom Day, Voice of America interviewed three editors from different media in Venezuela. Cesar Batiz, director of *El Pitazo*, says that in addition to censorship, journalists must overcome the difficulties of being citizens in Venezuela.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/venezuela-periodismo-censura-libertad-39099>

World Press Freedom Day: Press challenges in the Americas Episode 1 *El Mundo al día* daily newscast.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/world-today-197356>

World Press Freedom Day: Press challenges in the Americas Episode 2 *El Mundo al día* daily newscast.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/el-mundo-al-d%C3%ADa-198896>

Nicaraguan reporters working from exile: Special coverage of the struggles Nicaraguan journalists endure living in Costa Rica. More than a year has passed since one of Nicaragua's worst crises began, with more than 65,000 people were exiled from the country, among them journalists. VOA interviewed communicators who explain why they are determined to continue their work.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/nicaragua-periodistas-exiliados-costa-rica-155491>

Press Freedom in Nicaragua - July 2019: Journalists denounce the persecution and attacks for criticizing the government of Daniel Ortega, while others echo the government and deny the allegations. The protagonists themselves speak about the state of press freedom in the country.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/periodistas-nicaragua-buscan-mantener-viva-la-libertad-de-prensa-197684>

<https://www.voanoticias.com/centroamerica/dia-de-la-libertad-de-prensa-nicaragua> (web)

Nicaragua: Journalists denounce persecution and increased censorship. Daniel Ortega's government actions limiting press freedom worsen during pandemic.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/centroamerica/periodistas-nicaraguenses-denuncian-aumento-de-censura-para-reportar-sobre-covid19>

Repression, censorship faced by media professionals in Venezuela, a country where access to official information is practically impossible and the exercise of free press is often repressed and journalists jailed.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/dia-de-la-libertad-de-prensa-venezuela-situacion-silencio-censura>

Venezuelans explain to VOA what it is like to live without newspapers in a country where the media has been progressively reduced since 2017, among other reasons due to the official monopoly of supplies, censorship and the economic crisis.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/venezuela-no-tienes-cpmo-informarte-efecto-estar-sin-peripdicos>

COVID-19, the virus that attacks the freedom of the press in Venezuela. VOA interviews journalists who have been harassed by Venezuelan forces due to their reports about the pandemic in Venezuela.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/covid19-virus-ataca-libertad-prensa-venezuela>

The challenges to exercise journalism in Venezuela in crisis. In the state of Zulia, journalist Gustavo Ocando narrates his experience.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/venezuela-periodismo-reto-noticias-falta-electricidad-gasolina>

The president of the Inter-American Press Association's Committee on Freedom of the Press and Opinion, Roberto Rock, analyzes for VOA the collateral effects of the coronavirus crisis in the media.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/coronavirus/dia-de-la-libertad-de-prensa-en-tiempos-del-coronavirus>

Press freedom in Latin America: What are the challenges? VOA spoke with Edinson Lanza, expert for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/america-latina/libertad-de-prensa-latinoamerica-desafios>

SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA DIVISION

VOA Turkish exclusively videotaped when Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's bodyguards assaulted protestors in front of the Turkish Ambassador's residence in Washington, D.C. This exclusive video went viral and all global media outlets, including CNN, BBC, NBC, AP and Reuters, asked permission to use the [VOA Turkish video](#). As a result of this video, U.S. prosecutors officially charged members of Erdogan's security detail. Later charges against 11 of the 15 members were dropped.

<https://www.amerikaninsesi.com/a/washington-daki-olarlar-sirasinda-cumhurbaskani-erdogan-in-goruntuleri/3855933.html>

Salman Rushdie: Truth is Under Attack All Over the World

<https://www.urduvoa.com/a/salman-rushdie-talks-about-his-new-novel-quichotte/5200544.html>

"Censorship is a sophisticated art in Pakistan," says analyst Wusatullah Khan

<https://www.urduvoa.com/a/wusatullah-khan-interview/4620534.html>

"The worst censorship is in the name of democracy," says analyst Talat Hussain

<https://www.urduvoa.com/a/talat-hussain-interview/4607815.html>

"No Space for Satire in Pakistan," says Cartoonist Sabir Zafar

<https://www.urduvoa.com/a/space-for-satire-in-pakistan-is-shrinking-says-cartoonist-sabir-zafar-/4594468.html>

Investigative journalist pays the price for expose in India

<https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/investigative-journalist-pays-price-expose-india>

Self-censorship in Afghanistan

<https://www.pashtovoa.com/a/is-there-is-freedom-of-press-in-afghanistan-/5403122.html>

Panel discussion with Afghan journalists around the world on press freedom in Afghanistan

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2SNl_YjBaQ&feature=youtu.be

International Radio Day

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2640750519478059&ref=watch_permalink

Space for Free Media in Azerbaijan Shrinking, Journalists Say

<https://www.voanews.com/press-freedom/space-free-media-azerbaijan-shrinking-journalists-say>

Kidnapped, Blindfolded, Tossed in Jail: An Azerbaijani Reporter's Tale

<https://www.voanews.com/press-freedom/kidnapped-blindfolded-tossed-jail-azerbaijani-reporters-exclusive-tale>

REFUGEES

VOA has some of its biggest and most loyal audiences in the same war-torn and impoverished countries that spawn many of the world's refugees, ranging from Afghanistan to East Africa to Venezuela. With that in mind, VOA has long committed attention and resources to the refugee issue, examining the conditions that drive people to flee, the harrowing dangers they encounter on their travels, and the life that awaits them when – and if – they make it to a place of safe refuge.

NEWS CENTER

Displaced: One year after nearly 1 million Rohingya Muslims were forcibly evicted from Myanmar, VOA contributor Greta Van Susteren and a camera crew went behind the walls of the Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh to hear their stories of murder and rape. Although “safe” in Bangladesh, she found them depressed, isolated, prevented from attending school or working, and a target for violent extremists and human traffickers. As the Bangladesh monsoon season hit, the crew encountered potentially disastrous landslides and an infrastructure struggling to keep up with the need for food, supplies, and medicines. But they also found stories of hope as well.

<https://www.voacambodia.com/a/displaced-rohingya-muslims-greta-van-susteren/4664703.html>

Shoura - An Experiment in Reconciliation in Post-Islamic State Iraq: VOA's refugee beat reporter Heather Murdock worked for the better part of a year with a talented team of editors and animators to prepare a 28-minute documentary called “Shoura,” which profiled a formerly Islamic State-controlled town in northern Iraq where today, the families and the victims of the extremist group are struggling to find a path to reconciliation.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/shoura-experiment-reconciliation-post-islamic-state-iraq-4297391>

The Children the World Left Behind: Dated from the al Hol detention camp for the families of ISIS members in Syria, this was one of the last stories Heather Murdock was able to file before the coronavirus lockdown made it impossible for her to travel from her base in Istanbul. In this story, she profiles the children who were inculcated with Islamic State teaching from infancy and are still in its thrall, but who also now long to learn things like mathematics and English.

<https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/children-world-left-behind>

Reporter's Notebook: A Family's Escape From Syria's Idlib: As Russian-backed government forces moved in on Idlib – one of the last strongholds of resistance to Syria's Bashar al-Assad – desperate and hungry families risked everything to escape to areas still outside of government control. In one of those places – Manbij – Heather Murdock documented one family's account of their harrowing journey.

<https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/reporters-notebook-family-escape-syrias-idlib>

Confusion, Fear Permeate Northeastern Syria: When Turkish soldiers flooded into northern Syria in October 2019 with the avowed goal of crushing a pro-American Kurdish militia, thousands of Kurdish civilians fled in panic, with most Western reporters and NGO personnel close behind. Along with three other reporters, Heather Murdock drove in the other direction – toward the advancing Turkish forces – until incoming artillery forced them to turn their van around.

<https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/confusion-fear-permeate-northeastern-syria>

Reporter's Notebook: Vulnerable Migrants in Libya Demand Passage to Safety: Libya is, for many African refugees, the jumping-off point for the dangerous sea voyage across the Mediterranean. But most have already undergone ghastly threats and deprivations to get that far. On a reporting trip to

Tripoli in July 2019, Heather Murdock talked to some of them about their ordeals of rape, murder and kidnappings – as well as their dreams for a better future.

<https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/reporters-notebook-vulnerable-migrants-libya-demand-passage-safety>

Life Under Islamic State: Escape From Raqqa: In October 2017, just a week after coalition forces had declared victory over the Islamic State capital of Raqqa, Heather Murdock was in nearby Ain Issa, Syria, to talk to some who had fled from the fighting. One of those was 20-year-old Yazan Abdulrahman, who told Heather how he had escaped from IS and gotten a small measure of revenge on the militants who destroyed his city.

<https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/life-under-islamic-state-escape-raqqa>

Life Under Islamic State: The Heartbreak of Freedom: As the Islamic State's grip on Mosul was crumbling in March 2017, Heather Murdock was at the edge of the city hearing the stories of people like Ayman Khalaf, 25, who told her 19 of his family members were killed and he was forced to abandon their bodies in the rubble. In a follow-up story, aid workers told Heather as many as 1 million people like Ayman might be displaced from Mosul by the time the fighting was done.

<https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/life-under-islamic-state-heartbreak-freedom>
<https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/thousands-flee-mosul-daily-battle-intensifies>

Islamic State Terror: The Lost City of Sinjar: Once home to roughly 80,000 people and a traditional homeland for the Yazidi people, the Iraqi city of Sinjar lay in ruins when Heather Murdock visited it in November 2016, a year after it had been liberated from Islamic State. There she found it still a virtual ghost city, haunted by mass graves where thousands of Yazidis were buried nearby.

<https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/islamic-state-terror-lost-city-sinjar>

This Refugee Crisis Happening Now in America's Backyard: As Venezuela's economic collapse left its residents desperate and impoverished, more and more fled to neighboring countries, creating the Western Hemisphere's greatest refugee crisis. Celia Mendoza, reporting for both Spanish and English-language platforms, traveled to the Colombia-Venezuela border in March 2018 and again in October 2019 to hear some of their stories.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/ecuador-closes-border-venezuela-stranding-refugees-4058986>
<https://www.voanews.com/americas/refugee-crisis-happening-now-americas-backyard>

Children in Bangladesh's Rohingya Camps Draw Scenes of Horror: With both a Burmese and a Bangla language service, VOA was uniquely positioned to cover the military atrocities in Myanmar's Rakhine State beginning in late August 2017 that eventually drove about 1 million refugees into neighboring Bangladesh. Two months later, Joe Freeman was with some of those refugees in Cox's Bazar, where he photographed young children's heartbreaking drawings of burning houses, attacking helicopters gunships, residents fleeing gunfire and sword-wielding mobs.

<https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/children-bangladeshs-rohingya-camps-draw-scenes-horror>

Rohingya Refugee Finds His Identity Helping Others Resettle: Among the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees, a lucky few made it the United States, where their unique language presented special challenges in starting a new life. Midwest correspondent Kane Farabaugh interviewed an earlier Rohingya arrival who has found a new role for himself easing the way for the newcomers.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/rohingya-refugee-finds-his-identity-helping-others-resettle-3765161>

Rohingya End Hard Year Still in Limbo: In December 2018, a year after fleeing the atrocities in Myanmar's Rakhine State, close to 1 million Rohingya remained in an uncertain limbo in the sprawling refugee camps at Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh – as they still do today. Contract stringer Steve Sandford spent his Christmas visiting the camps to ask about their future prospects, and the conditions they were living in at the time.

<https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/rohingya-end-hard-year-still-limbo>

The Waiting Game: Confusion at Kenya's Kakuma Refugee Camp: When in early 2017, a U.S. court halted a ban on travel to the United States imposed by the incoming Trump administration, confusion and anxiety were everywhere in Kenya's vast refugee camps at Kakuma and Dadaab. East Africa correspondent Jill Craig visited the Kakuma camp with her TV camera to talk to some residents whose travel plans to the United States had been thrown into limbo.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/waiting-game-confusion-kenyas-kakuma-refugee-camp-3743061>

Immigration Issue Threatens to Tear EU Apart as Summit Approaches: By June of 2018, the flood of refugees into Europe was threatening to pull the EU bloc apart. London-based TV reporter Henry Ridgwell laid out the fault lines ahead of a two-day summit in Brussels would struggle ineffectively to find a common policy.

<https://www.voanews.com/europe/immigration-issue-threatens-tear-eu-apart-summit-approaches>

Geneva Refugee Summit Grapples with Issues of Equity: More than four years into Europe's refugee crisis, the conditions that send the migrants to the continent have not abated. On the eve of the UNHCR's first Global Refugee Forum in December, 2019, Jamie Dettmer laid out the scope of a problem that has driven nearly 26 million from their homelands, by the U.N.'s count.

<https://www.voanews.com/europe/geneva-refugee-summit-grapples-issues-equity>

Lebanon's Politicians Want Syrian Refugees to Leave: Six years after fleeing to Lebanon as their homes were destroyed, Syrian refugees in August 2019 were finding themselves no longer welcome in their adopted home. Jamie Dettmer spoke by Skype with one war widow who told him she stays in Lebanon only for the sake of her two young daughters.

<https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/lebanons-politicians-want-syrian-refugees-leave>

"Too Many, Too Many" Migrants Raped, Shot in Libya, Says Nigerian Survivor: For many Africa refugees, reaching the relative safety of Europe was not the end of their horrors. In Martinsicuro, Abruzzo, Italy, Jamie Dettmer interviews a 23-year-old Nigerian woman who survived the passage through Libya only to encounter beatings and sexual abuse once she reached Italy.

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/too-many-too-many-migrants-raped-shot-libya-says-nigerian-survivor>

In Mafia's Death Triangle Nigerian, Ghanaian Migrants Just Try to Survive: Father Carlo Ladicicco, a 65-year-old Catholic priest, could be enjoying retirement after 35 years as a missionary in a remote region of Peru. Instead, he is using his pension to subsidize his pastoral outreach to some of the poorest and most exploited African migrants in Italy – just a 40-minute drive from his birthplace in the country's southern region of Campania.

<https://www.voanews.com/europe/mafias-death-triangle-nigerian-ghanian-migrants-just-try-survive>

Refugees in Greek Camp Fight Anxiety, Illness, Boredom: During his coverage of the European refugee crisis in March 2016, Jamie Dettmer offered a close-up look at the daily life in a migrant camp on the Greek-Macedonian border, where the residents spent their time wondering when – if ever – the border would open and they would be able to move on toward Germany, Britain or another dreamed-of destination.

<https://www.voanews.com/europe/refugees-greek-camp-fight-anxiety-illness-boredom>

Refugees Caught in Tide of European History: In March of 2016, the countries of southeastern Europe were throwing up barbed-wire barricades to stop a flood of refugees from the Syrian civil war. Europe-based reporter Jamie Dettmer traveled to Thessaloniki, Greece, for a series of articles about the migrants and the larger implications of the European response for the continent's future.

<https://www.voanews.com/europe/refugees-caught-tide-european-history>

AFRICA DIVISION

VOA interview with Sudanese Chol Majok, who won the 3rd District Common Council seat in Syracuse, New York, becoming the first former refugee in city history to do so.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/lost-boy-sudan-wins-new-york-state-district-councilor-seat>

Our Voices program discusses the plight of African refugees, stories of hope and resilience from the residents of the Kakuma camp, and a look at African women empowering refugees. One of the hosts joined remotely from the camp for a closer look at the African refugee experience:

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/voa-our-voices-103-refugees-africa-3796796>

VOA Central Africa reported on the repatriation of more than 500 Burundians from three refugee camps in Tanzania.

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/hundreds-return-burundi-mass-repatriation-effort-begins>
(English)

<https://www.radiyoyacuvoa.com/a/tanzaniya-ntiyabaye-igitahukana-ku-nguvu-impunzi-z-abarundi-/5105441.html>

"They don't want refugees here, and they're doing everything they can to make those people go," Negev Refugees Center head Moran Mekamel told VOA about Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu canceling a UNHCR agreement to allow half of the country's more than 30,000 African migrants to stay as legal residents while resettling the other half in Western countries.

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/african-migrants-limbo-after-israel-nixes-resettlement-plan>

"I came to this camp when I was three years old, and I can't remember where we used to live," an internally displaced orphan told the VOA Kirundi program, *From the Provinces*, as Burundian authorities closed more than 100 camps for survivors of ethnic violence. "I consider myself lucky because I can at least recall my parents' names."

<https://www.radiyoyacuvoa.com/a/3739600.html>

The Horn of Africa Service spoke to survivors and witnesses of the drowning of dozens of migrants off the coast of Yemen after smugglers forced nearly 300 migrants from Ethiopia and Somalia overboard from two separate boats.

<https://www.voafaanoromoo.com/a/africa-migrants-yemen-/3982164.html>

"I realized that I had to find a way to reunite with my family," Burundian refugee Bienvenue Kagisye told VOA Kirundi after hearing his wife on the call-in show *Murisanga*. Justine Uwinana discussed

the difficulties of raising four children on her own after being separated from her husband during political unrest in 2015. As a result of the show, Kagisye contacted Uwinana via Facebook, and the two were reunited.

<https://www.radiyoyacuvoa.com/a/4061072.html>

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC DIVISION

VOA Mandarin conducted an exclusive Interview with Nury Turkel, Uyghur American Lawyer and Member of Commission on International Religious Freedom on Uyghur Refugees (5/31/2020).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/voaweishi-20200530-voaio-hongkong-xinjiang-human-right/5442429.html>

China Secretly Demands Extradition of Uyghur Refugees in Turkey (5/21/2020).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/china-ask-turkey-to-extradict-uyghur-dissidents-05202020/5428464.html>

Nepal Mulls Law to Repatriate Tibetan Refugees back to China (10/9/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/nepal-to-sign-extradition-treaty-with-china-under-pressure20191009/5115920.html>

Taipei Rally to Call for Asylum for Hong Kong Refugees (9/29/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/taiwan-rally-to-support-hong-kong/5103040.html>

Hong Kong Bookstore Owner Found Asylum in Taipei (9/7/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/former-hk-bookseller-fundraising-reopen-store-in-taiwan-20190907/5073952.html>

Taiwan President Rules out Amendment to Refugee Law (9/4/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/Taiwan-President-Rules-Out-Refugee-Act-For-HK-Protesters-20190904/5069129.html>

Six Decades in Exile: Tibetan Refugee Settlement in India (7/30/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/tibetan-diaspora-community-speak-about-life-in-china-and-in-exile-one20190730/5020261.html>

Interview with Dalai Lama on International Refugee Day (6/20/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/a-conversation-with-the-dalai-lama-20190619/4965932.html>

Hong Kong Bookstore Owner Seeks Asylum in Taiwan (5/30/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/Lam-Wing-Kee-On-HK-Exile-In-Taiwan-20190530/4938710.html>

Germany Grants Asylum to two Hong Kong Political Refugees (5/23/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/Amnesty-International-On-HK-Asylum-Seekers-20190523/4929439.html>

Six Years of Pain: Memory of a Tibetan Refugee (3/12/2019).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/tibet-uprising-3-20190312/4824615.html>

Chinese Refugee Stranded in Taipei Airport for 70 Days (12/7/2018).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/taiwan-refugees-law-20181207/4690634.html>

Chinese Political Refugees Living in Fear in Thailand (4/5/2018).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/enforced-disappearance-make-overseas-chinese-live-in-fear-20180404/4332871.html>

Working with language services in the East Asia and Pacific Division, English to Asia produced a video marking the Refugee Day 2019 and highlighting the importance of helping refugees in the world – 2019 witnessed the highest levels of displacement on record, yet the U.S. resettlement program remained the largest in the world.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHwFk06tiUA>

Australian Bank to Compensate Cambodian Farmers for Lost Land (February 2020): A leading Australian bank agreed to pay more than 1,000 Cambodian families displaced by a sugar company it granted a loan to in 2011, even though the loan violated the bank's stated human rights standards.

<https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/australian-bank-compensate-cambodian-farmers-lost-land>

Explaining U.S. Immigration Policy: In November 2019, VOA Thai produced a series in Thai and an English news package on Jirayuth "New" Latthiwongsakorn, an undocumented immigrant who works as a doctor in San Francisco following his graduation from UCSF's Medical School and Harvard University's School of Public Health.

<https://burmese.voanews.com/a/5162480.html>

How COVID subsidy packages help refugees (April 2020).

<https://ne-np.facebook.com/VOATiengViet/videos/1112814325751093/>

ICJ ruling for Provisional Measures for Myanmar while investigating Genocide accusation: Cambridge International Law expert Prof Michael Becker explains (December 2019).

https://burmese.voanews.com/a/5207420.html?fbclid=IwAR0u9qmQdbZnyBknmunhngOUVOSXgEFXpQOKLEW08n_pwTORDtS2svF2gXM

Trump discusses Rohingya refugee issue during Asia trip (November 2017).

<https://burmese.voanews.com/a/trump-asia-trip-security-trade/4115596.html>

U.S.-Bangladesh Security talks include Rohingya issue (October 5, 2017).

<https://burmese.voanews.com/a/us-bangladesh-bilateral-dialogue/4056801.html>

Will Burmese Refugee resettlement programs affected by Trump's new Visa Ban? (March 7, 2017)

<https://burmese.voanews.com/a/new-travel-ban-law-/3752108.html>

EURASIA DIVISION

The Wall Between Us – A one-hour documentary by the VOA Russian Service about the immigration issue on the southern border of the United States. The Service participated in an exclusive ride-along with Custom and Border Patrol on the U.S.-Mexican border, witnessing apprehensions of illegal underage immigrants who were trying to get into the United States from their native countries, interviewing a CPB officer, and closely following a group of volunteers from Concordia, Kansas, who came to the border under the program "Border Immersion." They visited a detention center in the United States and a few centers for immigrants in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, handing out food and necessary items, and learning about the economic challenges local women are facing, violence against females, and immigrants. During the trip, the VOA Russian team interviewed

members of the Kansas group and an immigration lawyer. The "human factor" of immigration issues, not policies, was the primary focus of the documentary, which is self-narrated.
<https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/1370836319743333/>

Middle East migrants in Bosnia and their fight for survival while trying to reach the EU:
<https://ba.voanews.com/a/godisnji-sirijac-sa-djetetom-je-sada-u-sarajevu-na-putu-je-poginula-supruga-a-kcerku-je-uspio-vratiti-nakon-otmice/5247847.html>
<https://ba.voanews.com/a/srebrenica-ponuda-vlasnika-da-motel-ustupi-migrantima-podijelila-politicare/5211996.html>

VOA Bosnian reports on migrants and immigration in the United States.
<https://ba.voanews.com/a/imigrantski-restaurant-u-blizini-bijele-kuce-mjesto-dobre-hrane-ali-i-politicke-akcije/5297912.html>

VOA Macedonian's contribution to the VOA Project on refugees featured visits to a refugee camp in Tabanovce, North Macedonia, and a transit center in Gevgelija, where one of the refugees told VOA, "I don't want my daughter's childhood to be spent in a metal container. I don't want her to live in fear either."
<https://mk.voanews.com/a/voa-refugees-gevgelija-north-macedonia-world-refugees-day/4966825.html>
<https://mk.voanews.com/a/voa-macedonian-tabanovce-border-refugees-north-macedonia/4968624.html>

VOA Serbian interview with Libyan refugee Amran Khalifa, stuck in Serbia and separated from family in Canada:
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/amran-kalifa-borim-se-protiv-diskriminacije-moje-porodice/5250127.html>

Report on Afghan and other refugees stuck in Serbia on the way to Western Europe:
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/migranti-u-srbiji-san-duga%C4%8Dak-5-500-kilometara/4969543.html>

Report on migrants and refugees stuck in Serbia and being moved from shelter to shelter:
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/iseljeni-migranti-iz-baraka-u-beogradu/3849686.html>

Report featuring interviews with refugees and migrants from several Asian countries stuck in Serbia on their way to Western Europe:
<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/migranti-vecinom-nece-u-prihvatne-centre/3702242.html>

LATIN AMERICA DIVISION

Venezuela's refugee crisis is one of the largest in modern history. It is expected – according to the U.N. – that in 2020, it will surpass the scale of the Syrian refugee crisis. Over 4.6 million Venezuelans have fled their country.

PHOTO Gallery on Venezuelan refugees in the border town of Cucuta, Colombia.
<https://www.voanoticias.com/gallery/colombia-venezolanos-improvisan-campamentos-en-medio-de-la-pandemia>

Interview with Organization of American State Special Commissioner for Venezuelan Refugees David Smolansky, who talks about a unified vaccination card that 10 Latin American countries approved to improve health conditions of Venezuelan migrants and refugees.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/tarjeta-de-vacunación-para-venezolanos-en-el-exilio-162749>

Interview with Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in which he warns that if the massive flow of Venezuelan migrants continues, "there will be serious problems in the region." He also said that without adequate international aid, the generosity of the recipient countries "can turn into hostility."

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/entrevista-exclusiva-alto-comisionado-acnur-filippo-grandi-celia-mendoza-venezuela360-v360>

The Representative of the U.N. for Venezuelan migrants and refugees, Eduardo Stein, spoke with VOA about the International Donors Conference in solidarity with Venezuelan refugees and migrants, which seeks to raise funds to assist this group, as well as recipient countries in the midst of the pandemic. <https://www.voanoticias.com/portada/onu-dice-que-refugiados-venezolanos-se-encuentran-en-doble-vulnerabilidad>

Venezuelan migrant families grow in Colombia with new births. In August 2019, President Ivan Duque granted the right to Colombian nationality by birth to more than 24,000 children born to Venezuelan mothers and fathers who had been born in the country since August 19, 2015. <https://www.voanoticias.com/america-latina/migrantes-venezolanas-dan-luz-en-medio-de-la-pandemia-en-colombia>

Venezuelan refugees in Trinidad and Tobago - September 2019: The case of a Venezuelan family facing justice in Trinidad and Tobago. Arrest, detention, and deportation are three of the most common words among Venezuelans living in Trinidad and Tobago. In this first part of *Exiles in Paradise*, VOA follows the case that changed the life of an entire family, and analyze the justice system of the Caribbean nation.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/familia-sistema-justicia-trinidad-y-tobago-venezolanos-162924>

A human interest story on Venezuelan refugees forced to live in a parking lot to survive the economic crisis of COVID-19 in Bogota, Colombia.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/la-comunidad-del-parqueadero-201596>

USNS Comfort mission in Trinidad and Tobago - September 2019: VOA Spanish Service coverage of the USNS Comfort in Trinidad and Tobago, where it took care of patients, operated and treated Venezuelan refugees that don't have access to health in Trinidad and Tobago.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/usns-comfort-en-trinidad-y-tobago-155310>

More than 1 million Venezuelan migrants live in Colombia. Colombians develop initiatives to support these vulnerable groups.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/coronavirus/menu-solidario-sierra-nevada-familias-necesitadas-bogota>

U.S Humanitarian aid arrives in Cucuta, Colombia, for Venezuela - February 2020: Special Voice of America Spanish coverage of U.S humanitarian help sent to Colombia for Venezuela. Venezuelans are waiting for more information on how humanitarian aid sent by the United States will be distributed.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/cucuta-venezuela-colombia-acopio-ayuda-39598>

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/crece-tension-frontera-colombia-venezuela-tras-llegada-ayuda-humanitaria-159044>

Venezuelan migrants in several countries, including the United States, explain their concerns about the loss of their jobs due to the coronavirus. Now they have trouble supporting themselves, and are also unable to help their relatives with remittances that they used to send to Venezuela.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/coronavirus/venezuela-coronavirus-impacto-remesas-extranjero>

After meeting every weekend at a restaurant in Silicon Valley, California, a group of young professionals created Code for Venezuela, a non-profit organization dedicated to finding solutions to Venezuelan needs.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/venezuela-codigo-ayuda-juvenes>

Interview with Ambassador William Brownfield, former U.S. career diplomat, who calls on the international community to take action to deal with the Venezuelan humanitarian crisis.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/desastre-humanitario-venezuela-william-brownfield>

The difficulties faced by Venezuelan refugees on their journey from Venezuela to Bogotá, the capital of Colombia. It was part of a five-episode series, *Walking to Freedom*, which received an Honorable Mention in the Narrative Series Category at the Gabriel Awards.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/multimedia/voa-migrantes-venezolanos-venezuela-colombia-caminantes-rutadelainfania>

VOA reported how hundreds of Venezuelans are having to cross dangerous illegal crossings, known as *trochas*, to be able to load from one place to another – between Cúcuta and Venezuela – with medicine and food with which they try to alleviate shortages and the hunger.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/el-precio-de-la-crisis-en-vilo-el-dia-dia-de-escolares-y-empleados-por-cierre-fronterizo>

VOA reported the tension on the border between Colombia and Venezuela after preventive closure due to COVID-19.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/coronavirus/colombia-cierra-fronteras-con-venezuela-por-el-covid-19>

Hundreds of Venezuelan migrants arrive in Cucuta, Colombia, with the intention of returning to Venezuela due to the pandemic.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/america-latina/largas-filas-venezolanos-frontera-colombia-cucuta>

VOA interviewed Venezuelan migrants in Bolivia, where they came looking for opportunities and to escape the crisis in their country.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/america-latina/migrantes-venezolanos-se-abren-camino-en-bolivia-pese-dificultades>

Series on the US border and the challenges facing refugees and migrants: *Border Voices: Special Report from the US-Mexico Border*, features Interviews with several US officials including from Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) and U.S. representatives.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/especial-voces-de-la-frontera-183576>

The deadly danger of crossing the river to reach the United States: Special Report from the U.S. Border featuring VOA Spanish interviews with Border Patrol agents. Thousands of immigrants risk their lives by crossing the dangerous Rio Grande, on the U.S.-Mexico border. The authorities not only warn about the deadly risk of crossing the river, but the danger to which immigrants are exposed when encountering criminal organizations.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/peligro-mortal-cruzar-r%C3%ADo-eeuu-inmigracion-mexico-159889>

The right to information access continues to be a concern in Haiti. Lack of transparency by authorities and access to information are continually denied. VOA Creole also interviewed Martine Lindor, the coordinator of a group of Haitian female journalists. She agrees that there is a lack of access to information for Haitian journalists. She added that the female journalists are not treated equally to men. "Although there are several female in the journalism in Haiti, they are not being treated the same as their male counterpart," she said. Several Haitian journalists interviewed by VOA Creole said press freedom in Haiti remains partly free.

<https://www.voanouvel.com/a/ki-kote-nou-ye-nan-libete-lapres-ann-ayiti-ki-di-li-se-yon-sosyete-demokratik-/5405523.html>

SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA DIVISION

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo denounced as "appalling" reports that Iranian border guards tortured and drowned dozens of migrants from Afghanistan to prevent their entry into Iran.

<https://www.darivoo.com/a/popmeo-on-afghan-refugees-drowned-by-iranian-guards/5408520.html>

Exclusive premier of *I AM YOU* film in New York, written and directed by Afghan American director Sonia Nassery Cole:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=201488644439218>

Iran accepted responsibility for the death of Afghan refugees in vehicle fire.

<https://www.pashtovoa.com/a/us-accept-responsibility-on-afghan-immigrants-car-/5452830.html>

COVID-19 in Iran and deportation of hundreds of thousands Afghan refugees within few months.

<https://www.darivoo.com/a/nearly-200000-afghan-refugees-returned-from-iran-iom-reported/5346152.html>

Fire at a Rohingya camp:

<https://business.facebook.com/watch/?v=660443384801564>

Chicago Rohingya: More than 2,000 Rohingyas are living in Chicago and trying to change their lives adopting American lifestyles. They are trying to help people they left in Myanmar and in refugee camps in Bangladesh.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWFq4diz8zY>

Human trafficking groups active at the Rohingya refugee camps:

<https://business.facebook.com/watch/?v=577496723028105>

Facebook live from Rohingya refugee camp:

https://business.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=868603956834149&ref=watch_permalink

Bangladesh: Special program on English learning:

<https://www.voabangla.com/a/5039095.html>

Building a new refugee camp in Gire' Spi in Syria:

<https://www.dengiamerika.com/a/5204868.html>

Plight of the refugees in Van, Turkey:

<https://www.dengiamerika.com/a/5098536.html>

Life of refugees between France and Britain:

<https://www.dengiamerika.com/a/4812568.html>

Refugees struggle between the law and changes:

<https://www.dengiamerika.com/a/4814330.html>

Living condition of refugees in Ain Isa camp in Syria:

<https://www.dengiamerika.com/a/4682752.html>

The life of a child, a refugee from Qamishli after Turkey military operation:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2467968066666101>

Refugees on strike in front of the U.N. office in Arbil:

<https://www.dengiamerika.com/a/4448643.html>

A Yazidi school in a refugee camp:

<https://www.dengiamerika.com/a/4254776.html>

Displaced people from Idlib go to Raqqa:

<https://www.dengiamerika.com/a/5265485.html>

Displaced people from Mosul stay in Arbil camps:

<https://www.dengiamerika.com/a/4675546.html>

The tragedy of a Yezidi refugee family whose children are disabled:

https://www.dengeamerika.com/a/cind%C3%AE_%C3%AAz%C3%AEd%C3%AE/5390331.html

VOA PARTNERSHIPS:

Displaced: The Rohingya crisis through the eyes of American journalism icon Greta Van Susteren.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/voa-documentary-depth-look-rohingya-their-exodus-myanmar-3798241>

VOA launches Venezuela-focused TV news program in response to migration crisis:

<https://www.usagm.gov/2019/09/27/voa-launches-venezuela-focused-tv-news-program/>

Hell and Hope documentary meets Yazidi Refugee girls. Their migration story is told through the eyes of two immigrants to the United States.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/hell-and-hope-3846506>

Rohingya *Lifeline* newscast is the only international news broadcast in the Rohingya language, and it comes from Washington – established in 2019.

<https://www.voabangla.com/z/5895>

Wedded to ISIS: Through illustration and from a refugee camp, a Syrian woman recounts how the Islamic State turned her life upside down.

<https://projects.voanews.com/wedded-to-isis/>

Former refugee Ron Bultongez is living the American dream after becoming a Top 24 Finalist on American Idol 2018. The story features a live musical performance in a VOA studio.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/border-crossings-ron-bultongez-3971891>

Shoura, an experimental documentary from VOA explores a town torn between victims of Islamic State and families of IS members, and coming to terms with the past and their role in mass displacement.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/shoura-experiment-reconciliation-post-islamic-state-iraq-4297391>

Tens of thousands of Afghan refugees return to their homeland in 2020 to little media notice, fanning COVID-19 fears.

<https://www.voanews.com/science-health/coronavirus-outbreak/returning-refugees-could-spread-coronavirus-afghanistan-un>

VOA team coverage: Global Refugee Forum to Seek Greater Support for Forcibly Displaced.

<https://www.voanews.com/europe/global-refugee-forum-seek-greater-support-forcibly-displaced>

Rohingya Refugees Struggle to Rebuild After Devastating Fire. Original video and sound from Rohingya refugees.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/rohingya-refugees-struggle-rebuild-after-devastating-fire-4296321>

VOA, one of a few news organizations to cover displacements to Niger.

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/thousands-flee-violence-nw-nigeria-seek-safety-niger>

VOA Editorial: World Refugee Day 2019.

<https://editorials.voanews.com/a/world-refugee-day-2019/4964078.html>

VOA web content reaches those with no internet connection. Deployment to refugee camps is forthcoming.

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/solar-powered-library-helps-remote-students/3240836.html>

American English-language curriculum for Rohingya refugees. A one-year-long partnership between the Voice of America and UNHCR.

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/4876975.html>

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/5291633.html>

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/4883628.html>

LEARNING ENGLISH (also for Peace Corps, U.S. State Department and Ministries of Education):

Let's Learn English – Level 1: <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/p/5644.html>

The 52-episode program for beginning English learners is available on the internet, radio and TV broadcasts. It comes with downloadable lesson plans for teachers and students that include instruction in speaking, vocabulary and writing. There are also printable worksheets and assessments.

Let's Learn English – Level 2: <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/p/6765.html>

Once the students complete the 52-lesson LLE-1, they can move to Let's Learn English – Level 2. The 30-episode program is also available on the internet, radio and TV broadcasts.

TOEFL Minute (a two-minute program to be launched in June).

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/z/5974>

TOEFL Minute is a video series from VOA Learning English and the Educational Testing Service to prepare learners for the TOEFL.

How to Pronounce: <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/z/6042>

A two-minute video program to teach American English pronunciation.

English in a Minute: <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/z/3619>

A one-minute video program to teach American English idioms.

English @ the Movies: <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/z/4691>

A two-minute video program to teach conversations in American movies.

Learning English TV – VOA 60: <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/z/3613>

A daily 60-second video program on U.S. and world news.

News Words: <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/z/3620>

A one-minute video program to explain vocabulary in the news.

Everyday Grammar TV: <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/z/4716>

A two-minute program to teach grammar that is used in daily conversation.

WOMEN

The Voice of America addresses issues critical to the United States, among which is the empowerment of women. VOA not only covers women's issues and current challenges, in the United States as well as globally, but new initiatives at VOA promote women's inclusion and representation in the media and amplify women's voices. Toward that end, in 2018, VOA launched the VOA Women's Caucus with the support of VOA Director Amanda Bennett to ensure that women are well-represented in VOA coverage and to offer professional development opportunities for VOA journalists. Recent VOA projects include *Worth of a Girl, Our Voices*, and the *50:50 Project*, the aim of which is to achieve gender equality in on-air programming. These projects and VOA's coverage about women – their issues and challenges, as well as their achievements and successes – follow.

AFRICA DIVISION

The VOA project on child marriage, *The Worth of a Girl*, featuring in-depth interviews with child brides from South and East Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

<https://projects.voanews.com/child-marriage/documentary.html>

The arrival of an Ethiopian Airlines flight with an all-female crew at Dulles Airport in recognition of International Women's Day was reported by VOA Amharic and carried by other African services.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/all-female-ethiopian-flight-crew-aims-inspire-4217316>

VOA interviewed Freweini Mebrahtu, 2019's CNN Hero of the Year, recognized for producing a patented, reusable menstrual pad for girls in her native Ethiopia where menstruation can still be considered taboo.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/ethiopian-hero-works-give-girls-back-their-dignity-4135761>

Launch of *Our Voices*, a talk show for and about African women and the issues they care about most. Show hosts and producers have gone on the road in Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and Ghana to create content with affiliates, and recent qualitative research shows a strong interest in the program from young and middle aged women in Africa.

<https://www.voanews.com/watch/our-voices>

Two women become the first Somali immigrants to win local elections in Minnesota.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/us-somali-election-winners-urge-women-back-home-take-politics>
(Somali)

U.S. business magnate and philanthropist Bill Gates gave a wide-ranging interview to the English to Africa Service on women health and development goals.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/voa-interview-bill-gates>

The English to Africa Service produced an in-depth report on the cultural significance of female genital mutilation in Africa.

<https://www.voanews.com/science-health/fgm-engenders-sharp-cultural-divide>

This episode of the weekly talk show *Straight Talk Africa* explores the challenges that lie ahead in empowering women and girls in Africa:

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/gender-equality-africa-straight-talk-africa-simulcast-wed-1771381>

Minnesota Congresswoman Ilhan Omar spoke to reporters in Niger following talks on combating violent extremism in the Sahel. Reporters from VOA's Niamey bureau shot and transmitted video of remarks by Omar and by Congresswomen Sheila Jackson Lee and Karen Bass.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9y-cnCv29dg&feature=youtu.be>

VOA Amharic interviewed Minnesota nurse practitioner Furtu Annota about her research into the issue of domestic violence among immigrant communities in the United States.

<https://www.facebook.com/VOARomo/videos/2390737861141128/>

VOA English to Africa followed a group of young South African and American women on a road trip devoted to the history of civil rights in Alabama.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/us-civil-rights-road-trip-inspires-south-african-girls-3795136>

"At the personal level, I'm really proud of this accomplishment. But it's also a burden, because the responsibility is huge and expectations are huge," Ethiopia's first female Supreme Court Chief Justice Meaza Ashenafi told VOA Amharic.

<https://amharic.voanews.com/a/ethiopia-judicial-independence-conversation-with-meaza-ashenafi-president-of-federal-supreme-court-of-ethiopia-voa-alula-kebede-june-2019/4945360.html?fbclid=IwAR2qHPDYVkjM3NSY2J1VFloh3BYY9L1AL09MGCwvIpkMGURwsGfqd1qRhkA>

More than 100 Ethiopian high school girls joined fellow computer coders on Skype and on Google Hangout in five days of uCodeGirl raining in Addis Ababa. VOA Amharic interviewed the founder, Bethlehem Gronneberg.

<https://twitter.com/uCodeGirl>

VOA Zimbabwe helped uncover the story of more than 100 Zimbabwean women who were trafficked to Kuwait in 2017. The Service interview some of the girls who escaped sparked a parliamentary inquiry.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/africa-54-3894876>

VOA Somali was there when 60-year-old Falhad Mohamud Ahmed and her 28-year-old daughter got their degrees from George Mason University.

<https://www.facebook.com/voasomali1/videos/371406276833520/?v=371406276833520>

English to Africa interviewed Cherissa Jackson, the founder of Project Give Hope, an organization working to improve cervical cancer treatment for Ugandan women.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/africa-54-3780061>

"I encouraged them not to stay quiet about the crime of rape committed against them," Rwandan activist Godelieve Mukasarasi told VOA Kinyarwanda after accepting an International Women of Courage Award at the State Department.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/women-courage-fight-inequality-injustice>

"Can you imagine being held captive with terrorists, men who frighten you every single day for three years? When you are released, you are not normal," U.S. Representative Frederica Wilson (D-FL) told VOA Hausa about more than 100 former "Chibok Girls" who were freed from Boko Haram and are now starting classes at the American University of Nigeria.

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/more-100-chibok-girls-restart-education-nigeria>

"The benefits are immeasurable," 14-year-old self-taught cobbler Zainab Mu'azu told VOA Hausa. "This gives me the opportunity to fend for myself and even help others." At a time when many girls in Northern Nigeria are street hawkers, Mu'azu's small business produces 20 pairs of shoes a day. <https://www.facebook.com/voahausa/videos/10154786305083499/>

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC DIVISION

VOA Connect: Special Needs for Female Healthcare Providers Fighting COVID at the Frontlines Often Overlooked. Ding Yi and her fellow volunteers are delivering feminine hygiene products to female frontline healthcare providers (3/12/2020). <https://www.voachinese.com/a/voaconnect-experience-in-delivering-feminine-hygiene-products-to-front-line-20200313/5327648.html>

For exposing the mass detainment camps in Xinjiang, Sayragul Sauytba, an ethnic Kazakh woman from Xinjiang received an International Women of Courage Award at the U.S. Department of State. She was one of the 12 women honored at a ceremony chaired by First Lady Melania Trump (3/5/2020). <https://www.voachinese.com/a/international-women-of-courage-awards-20200303/5315112.html>

Repeatedly Banned in China, MeToo in China Art Exhibit Found its Voice in New York: Outlawed in several Chinese cities, the Me Too in China art exhibit came to Manhattan. On its opening day, about 50 participants formed a human chain on a street in Lower Manhattan to show their support to victims of sexual assaults (10/9/2019). <https://www.voachinese.com/a/metoo-in-china-exhibition-ny-20191008/5116335.html>

Pakistani Women Sold to China as Brides Recount Their Ordeal: Cases of Pakistani Women who were fooled into marrying Chinese men or even kidnapped to China have come under increasing international scrutiny. Seven women spoke to the Associated Press and talked about their ordeal (6/20/2019). <https://www.voachinese.com/a/pakistan-brides-in-china-20190619/4965925.html>

The Aftermath of the One Child Policy: Abandoned Babies and Vulnerable Widows: China has ended its one child policy. However, this long-lasting policy has exacerbated some women's vulnerabilities. Old widows in rural areas are suffering from loneliness, poverty and many have committed suicide. Many abandoned female babies are living in Buddhist nunneries (3/4/2019). <https://www.voachinese.com/a/Chinese-women-20190313/4827942.html>

Work Harder and Having More Children: How Can Chinese Women Fend Off Job Discrimination? The Chinese government has revised its decades-long one child policy and is now encouraging women to have more children. At the same time, the authorities also try to promote female workforce participation, putting pressure on women from both ends (3/8/2019). <https://www.voachinese.com/a/china-labor-force-gender-inequity-20190307/4818100.html>

Undeterred by the Big Brother, Chinese Women Are Waking Up and Fighting: One day while in jail for feminist activities, Wei Tingting heard a familiar song about fighting for women's rights. Realizing that her fellow activists were singing in nearby cells, she joined the chorus (10/20/2018). <https://www.voachinese.com/a/china-women-fighters-20181019/4621619.html>

Social Support Emboldens Chinese Women to Report Sexual Harassment Using Their Real Names: Eight Peking University students filed an application under their real names asking the university to publicly disclose details of their investigation of a case involving sexual harassment and suicide. Human rights legal advocates observed that support from the society has emboldened these women to stand up. (5/27/2018). <https://www.voachinese.com/a/Victims-Of-Sexual-Assault-Need-Support-To-Speak-Out-20180527/4411824.html>

Single Women Shaping the Future of China's Economy? Roseann Lake, who worked in China for five years, published a book entitled *Leftover in China: The Women Shaping the World's Next Superpower*. Speaking at New York, she said that unmarried women in China are shaping the country's economic future, and activists are finding creative ways to fend off censors and fight for women's rights (3/9/2018). <https://www.voachinese.com/a/china-single-woman-20180308/4286361.html>

The Glass Ceiling That is So Hard to Break: Chinese Women in Politics: China's rubber stamp parliament is holding its annual meeting in Beijing. Less than a quarter of the People's Congress delegates are female. Among the delegates who have been coming to the capital in the past five years, nearly half of the men hold leadership positions in the Communist Party, the government or the military, while most women are in the fields of entertainment, science, education and health (3/7/2018). <https://www.voachinese.com/a/chinese-women-in-politics-20180307/4284883.html>

As U.S. Women March, Chinese Activists Started a New Hashtag # MeToo in China to Counter Sexual Harassment: For the second year in a row, people marched in several U.S. cities for women's rights. Chinese activists also participated in these events and created a new hashtag #MetooinChina to say no to sexual harassment in China (1/21/2018). <https://www.voachinese.com/a/women-march-metoo-china-20180120/4217170.html>

The Fight Against Sexual Harassment: #MeToo in China: The U.S. MeToo Movement is causing a ripple effect across the Pacific Ocean. Chinese activists talk about how they, inspired and supported by people in the West, are fighting hard against sexual harassment and gender discrimination in China (1/13/2018). <https://www.voachinese.com/a/metoo-china-20180112/4205712.html>

2017 Year-ender: Gender Discrimination Faced by Chinese Women and the Tough Road Ahead: Observers highlighted explicit and implicit discriminations faced by contemporary Chinese women in the society and at work (12/28/2017).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/year-ender-chinese-women-20171227/4182225.html>

Manage the Family and Govern the Country? Women's Political Participation in the Xi Era (II): Will Chen, now a graduate student in the U.S., imagines all the missions impossible that are expected of a perfect woman when she goes back to China. Scholars and advocates point out that the current lack of female representation in high politics in China is only the tip of the iceberg, and more attention should be paid to the more profound obstacles women are facing at work, in society and in their own families (11/4/2017).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/gender-distribution-chinese-politics-20171103/4099321.html>

Men's World? Women's Political Participation in the Xi Era (I): Seven people were elevated to the apex of power as members of the standing committee of the Chinese Communist Party politburo and as always, all of them are men. Compared with the U.S. and Taiwan, is a lack of female political participation a unique Chinese problem? And in a country without a genuine representative system such as China, is gender balance in politics a worthy goal to pursue? (11/1/2017).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/gender-distribution-20171031/4094165.html>

The Few Women at the Top: Madame Mao, Liu Yandong and Sun Chunlan: Mao Zedong's slogan of "women holding up half of the sky" has never been put to practice at the highest echelon of the Chinese Communist Party. At the just concluded party congress, there is only one female politburo member and no woman serves in the politburo's standing committee (10/26/2017).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/news-few-females-in-china-party-hierarchy-20171025/4086139.html>

One of the Chinese Feminist Five Forbidden to Leave the Country for 10 Years: Wu Rongrong, one of the Chinese Feminist Five has been banned by Chinese authorities to leave the country for 10 years. She was detained along with the other four activists in 2015. She has been accepted by Hong Kong University's master of law program and has obtained a Hong Kong entry visa. Shanxi police forbids her to leave on the grounds that her case has not be closed yet. (9/14/2017).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/china-feminist-five-activist-10-year-travel-ban-20170913/4027803.html>

Sit Down with Mei Fong: New Book by a Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author: *One Child*, a new book on China's birth control policies and gender issues by Mei Fong, a Pulitzer Prize winner and former reporter for *Wall Street Journal*, was banned in China. To fight the censors in Beijing, she decided to publish the Chinese version online for free. (1/17/2017).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/interview-meifong-one-child/3679652.html>

Li Tingting: I Want To Live But Not Without Dignity: "As a women's activist, the most important thing is to be an activist who is alive," said Li Tingting, one of the five Chinese Feminist Five. "However, this does not mean I have to live without dignity. An activist has to be active." As Beijing is tightening its noose around all the domestic and international NGOs, Li said she would try hard to find herself a maneuvering space. (7/30/2016).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/chinese-feminist-li-tingting-20160729/3440734.html>

VOA Connect: Hooligan Sparrow: The Hooligan Sparrow is a documentary about a child rape case in China and the protests against it by activists including Ye Haiyan, whose nickname is Hooligan Sparrow. Its director, Wang Nanfu, spoke to VOA about the documentary, the issues it touched upon and how she risked arrests by the authorities to produce the movie (7/30/2016).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/rogue-yan-20160729/3440290.html>

In March 2018, VOA Indonesian three-part web and radio series put a spotlight on the issue of child marriage in Indonesia. The series gave voice to the victims who proclaimed that what they need is a "diploma, not a marriage certificate." The reports also look at the [impact of child marriage to next generation](#) with the increase of stunting among newborns in the country. Finally, the series dissect [the antiquated 1974 Marriage Law](#) allowing girls as young as 16 to enter marriage and the complications around advocacy for updating the law. The reporting also grew into a VOA-wide multimedia, multinational and multi-language project called *The Worth of a Girl*, which in 2020 received a Silver Medal from the New York Film Festival and a nomination for the prestigious Webby Award.

<https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/korban-kawin-anak-kami-butuh-ijazah-bukan-buku-nikah-/4283261.html>

Family's Ordeal Lays Bare Cambodia's Socio-Economic Fragility During Pandemic: Like other countries, Cambodia has faced serious economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, with its poor among the most vulnerable to unemployment and debt as businesses closed across the country and region. This story follows a family of domestic migrant workers who have been forced to return to their hometowns after losing their jobs (May 2020)

<https://www.voacambodia.com/a/family-ordeal-lays-bare-cambodia-socio-economic-fragility-during-pandemic/5421076.html>

Cambodia's Debt Trap: Taking Out New Loans to Pay Back Old Loans: In Siem Reap province's Kok Doung commune, not far from the temples of Angkor, more than 3,500 families depend on cassava farming and family members working in Thailand to pay off debts. No family is unique in rural Angkor Chum district when it comes to telling story of Cambodia's Debt Trap and VOA Khmer found out in this enterprise story (September 2019).

<https://www.voacambodia.com/a/cambodia-s-debt-trap-taking-out-new-loans-to-pay-back-old-loans/5074618.html>

Scared of Coronavirus, Pregnant Women Avoid Hospitals: Although there has been no evidence that pregnant women are at higher risk of COVID-19 infection than the general population, pregnant women can be at higher risk of infection due to changes in their bodies and immune systems. While the science behind this is still controversial, some Cambodian pregnant women have cancelled their doctors' appointments for pregnancy health checks, citing fears of contracting the virus when they leave home (April 2020).

<https://www.voacambodia.com/a/scared-of-coronavirus-pregnant-women-avoid-hospitals-/5368829.html>

Pilot Aims to be the First Vietnamese American Woman to Fly Solo Around the World (October 2019).

<https://www.facebook.com/VOATienqViet/videos/527581241152108/?v=527581241152108>

EURASIA DIVISION

VOA Russian's *Current Time America* went live with a special half-hour interview with NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson from the International Space Station. The Service asked Whitson questions submitted by viewers about her experiences in space. The program, aired live on the Current Time channel and Golos Ameriki's Facebook page.

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/iss-live-interview/3913133.html>

My American Neighbors – Stories by VOA Russian's Service about Russian immigrants who live in the United States. The following story features Jewish woman who was born in Moscow and talks about what it has been like for her as a Jew and a woman living in America:

https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/146473036800292/?story_fbid=10156771524837026&id=144776752025

VOA Russian's story about a lindy-hop dancer continuing to dance and teach at the age of 95:

<https://facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/vb.144776752025/2377316895837281/>

SHE PROJECT: VOA Russian project featuring inspiring stories about women in America. The following is about plus-size yoga teacher Jessamyn Stanley from Savannah, Georgia, who is breaking stereotypes, boundaries:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/she-yoga-instructor/5139989.html>

VOA Ukrainian's inspiring story about 92-year-old former U.S. air pilot Libbie Heintz. The story features interviews with the veteran and with the head of the Women's Memorial organization:

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/774497089630521/>

VOA Ukrainian interviewed Ukrainian veteran Yulija Matvijenko, who spoke about her experience fighting the Russian military in eastern Ukraine:

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/2178562795583792/>

VOA Ukrainian's report on gender equality in politics features exclusive interviews with male and female parliamentarians in Ukraine, the first U.S. Ambassador for Global Women's Issues Melanne Vermeer as well as Federiga Bindi of the Institute for Women Policy Research.

<https://www.facebook.com/chastime/videos/753016268429923/>

VOA Albanian's interview with Orkida Driza, a 13-and-a-half-year old bride, was the Service's contribution to VOA's *The Worth of a Girl* project:

<https://www.zeriamerikes.com/a/albania-minors-marriage/4638431.html>

The Battle of American Women for Justice and Equality: VOA Albanian's interviews with Jennifer Baumgardner, writer, activist, filmmaker and lecturer, and with Scott Stern, author of *The Trials of Nina McCall*, delve into the history of the suffering of American women over the years and their battles for justice.

<https://www.zeriamerikes.com/a/us-women-american-plan/4602574.html>

VOA Armenian's moving video report discusses the important but sensitive issue of domestic violence in Armenia featuring a hero who suffered violence from her partner, sheltered in her parents' house with her child, and whose mother was eventually axed by the father of her child.
<https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/taguhi/5318423.html>

VOA Armenian's video report about Michael, a young Armenian with autism, about his work, plans and dreams, illustrates the important issue of autism in Armenia and how families deal with it.
<https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/mikayel-film/5387566.html>

VOA Armenian's video report *Homeless in Armenia* examines homelessness in Armenia, featuring the story of a woman who has no shelter and has to live on the streets.
<https://www.amerikayidzayn.com/a/4796315.html>

A brave Bosnian woman defies pandemic to deliver goods:
<https://ba.voanews.com/a/heroji-u-ratu-protiv-virusa-jovanka-vozacica-kamiona/5398794.html>

A profile of a Bosnian psychologist who helps refugees, and now pandemic victims:
<https://ba.voanews.com/a/heroji-u-ratu-protiv-virusa-jovanka-vozacica-kamiona/5398794.html>

Bosnian Service reports on how the pandemic crisis and quarantine has provoked growing domestic violence in Bosnia:
<https://ba.voanews.com/a/u-uslovima-krize-i-izolacije-raste-opasnost-od-nasilja-prema-%C5%BEenama-i-djeci/5343125.html>

Bosnian Service extensive coverage of domestic violence and violence against women:
<https://ba.voanews.com/a/bih-prepoznati-i-prijaviti-nasilje-prema-%C5%BEenama/5181408.html>
<https://ba.voanews.com/a/od-svijesti-do-odgovornosti-za-nasilje-prema-zenama-kaznena-politika-i-dalje-losa-/5180528.html>
<https://ba.voanews.com/a/cetiri-od-deset-zena-u-bih-iskusilo-neki-vid-nasilja/5179932.html>

VOA Georgian report on how violence against women has spiked in Georgia during the coronavirus pandemic:
<https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/gender-based-violence-femicide-quarantine-georgia/5399904.html>

VOA Macedonian talks about 100 years of voting rights for women in the United States -- and yet there are more battles to fight:
<https://mk.voanews.com/a/women-rights-vote/5191202.htm>

VOA's Macedonian Service showcases the achievements of notable American women -- for the first time in history CIA has five women in key positions:
<https://mk.voanews.com/a/women-cia/5318433.html>

VOA Macedonian sheds light on women who played a role in "helping Neil Armstrong be the first man to walk on the Moon:"
<https://mk.voanews.com/a/women-of-apollo/5098367.html>

VOA Macedonian explains maternity leave policies in the United States:

<https://mk.voanews.com/a/4896001.html>

<https://mk.voanews.com/a/voa-maternity-leave-mothers-intefview-momsrising/4895943.html>
(video)

Serbian Service interview with Snezana Randjelovic Brown, a painter from Serbia who has lived in New Orleans for 11 years, is married to an African American man, and has a six-year-old mixed-race son. She tells VOA about her life experience and views about movement and protests for racial justice.

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/rasizam-sam-spoznala-kada-sam-dobila-sina-/5451460.html>

Serbian Service interview with Serbian American Photographer Vesna Pavlovic on her artistic work and career in the United States:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/komunikacija-kroz-digitalne-ekrane-u-objektivu-vesne-pavlovi%C4%87/5441415.html>

Serbian Service interview with Serbian American ObGyn Jovana Tavcar, who works at the Newton Wellesley hospital in Boston, Massachusetts, on her experience with pregnant women and childbirth during the coronavirus pandemic:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/ginekolog-jovana-tav%C4%8Dar-%C5%BEene-snose-poseban-teret-epidemije/5390643.html>

Report on Serbian American mathematician and engineer Milica Pantic, who from 2005 to 2019 was dean of the Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston, Massachusetts, the first woman engineer in such a position in the United States. She talks to VOA about her career and accomplishments in America.

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/srpska-nau%C4%8Dnica-zorica-panti%C4%87---oli%C4%8Denje-ameri%C4%8Dkog-sna-/4940667.html>

Serbian Service report on Inja Stanic, Serbian American pianist and currently president of the International Music School in Rockville, Maryland, on her career in the United States:

<https://www.glasamerike.net/a/inja-stani%C4%87---put-od-imigrantkinje-do-predsednice-popularne-muzi%C4%8Dke-%C5%A1kole-u-va%C5%A1ingtonu-/4820749.html>

LATIN AMERICA DIVISION

Foro (Spanish Service Weekly Analysis Program): Femicides in Latin America Out of control? – More than 3,000 women were killed in 2018, according to CEPAL, due to femicides in Latin America. Experts analyze the commitment of governments to combat this situation and explore possible solutions.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/foro-interamericano-femicidios-un-mal-fuera-de-control-193942>

Foro (Spanish Service Weekly News Analysis Program): Challenges of women in the Americas – Discrimination, gender inequality, poverty, violence, are some of the challenges that women face in the region. Three women experts discuss ways of change in the continent.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/foro-interamericano-desafios-de-la-mujer-en-las-americas-193120>

Hispanic Women Vote More than Men in U.S. Elections: VOA Spanish coverage of Texas primaries 2020.

In recent years, Hispanic women have left their mark on voter turnout figures in the United States. Their leading role has shaped a trend in states considered key, such as Texas.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/estadosunidos/mujeres-hispanas-explican-votan-mas-hombres-elecciones-eeuu>

Child Marriage in Latin America/VOA's *The Worth of a Girl* project – Contributions from the Spanish Service to VOA Spanish multimedia special August 2018. Latin America and the Caribbean are on the way to becoming the area of the world with the largest number of married girls, a phenomenon that is decreasing globally, but which has not subsided in the region.

https://www.voanoticias.com/search?search_api_fulltext=n%C3%B1as+casadas&type=3&sort_by=publication_time&changed=All

International Women's day multimedia special March 2020: For International Women's Day, VOA Spanish highlighted the hard work and effort of many women in Latin America and the United States to defend the rights of the worker, help defenseless animals, provide a plate of food to refugees and educate to reduce violence.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/dia-internacional-de-la-mujer>

To mark International Women's Day 2016, the Voice of America interviewed Republican Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, the first Hispanic woman elected to the U.S. Congress.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/entrevista-la-congresista-republicana-ileana-ros-lehtinen-28183>

Three deputies of the Venezuelan opposition parliament tell VOA what it means to participate in politics during the present crisis politics. They talk about threats from the government, concerns about the risk to their families, and the challenges of life in a country in the middle of a severe crisis take a toll. No matter the challenges, they believe women must continue to participate actively in politics.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/como-es-ser-mujer-politica-en-venezuela>

In Cucuta, Colombia, a project led by women provides food and help to Venezuelan migrants who have escaped the crisis in Venezuela.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/america-latina/mujeres-lideres-la-mano-amiga-de-los-migrantes-en-cucuta-colombia>

VOA special program on International Women's Day 2020 co-produced with the leading radio stations in Central America: Radio Sonora (Guatemala), Radio América (Honduras) and Radio YSKL (El Salvador) on the challenges faced by women in the United States and the region.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/en-vivo-violencia-contr-la-mujer-su-realidad-y-sus-desafios-193118>

<https://www.voanoticias.com/america-latina/centroamerica-una-de-las-regiones-mas-violentas-en-el-mundo-contr-las-mujeres> (Web)

In El Salvador, sexual violence is a problem faced by women, girls and adolescents. The results of these abuses range from premature pregnancies to severe psychological consequences.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/menores-de-edad-victimas-de-la-violencia-sexual-193133>

Testimonies of teenage mothers in Venezuela and what it means to raise children in the midst of a severe economic crisis, in which poor families lack food or sufficient funds to feed their children.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/la-madre-adolescente-en-venezuela-batalla-con-la-crisis-y-la-necesidad>

Venezuelan families explain how the collapse of the oil sector put their lives on hold.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/crisis-hambre-fragmenta-la-familia-del-trabajador-petrolero-venezolano>

Due to the severe food crisis in Venezuela, churches, institutions and citizens have invested resources and time in order to feed those in need.

<https://www.voanoticias.com/venezuela/venezuela-caridad-crisis-humanitaria-alimentos>

VOA Creole Service covered the situation of women entrepreneurs in Haiti and what should be done to change their situation. A weekly segment on radio and television features prominent Haitian women who speak about their experience, challenges and opportunities. In this example, the president of the Chamber of Commerce of Women Entrepreneurs in Haiti speaks about the impact after weeks of unrest this past year and the need for women to take on bigger responsibilities in politics:

<https://www.voanouvel.com/a/4677606.html>

Haitian mothers interviewed by the Creole Service talk about educating girls to be empowered and seek more participation in society.

<https://www.voanouvel.com/a/gender-equality/4592060.html>

PERSIAN DIVISION

Showcasing how the Iranian police have dealt with protesters since the first student uprising in 1999, this segment of VOA Persian's *Tablet* program focuses on Iranian women protesting for their rights. The Interior Ministry of Iran finally announced that 230 people had been killed during the November protests. According to Reuters, 1,500 were killed.

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/tblt-263871>

Iran Refuses to Free Jailed Baha'i Woman Apparently Eligible for Furlough

<https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/voa-news-iran/iran-refuses-free-jailed-bahai-woman-apparently-eligible-furlough>

Iranian Dissident Told She Can't Have Full Back Surgery Recovery Prior to Prison Term

<https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/voa-news-iran/iranian-dissident-told-she-cant-have-full-back-surgery-recovery-prior>

SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA DIVISION

VOA project *The Worth of a Girl*: What does a child bride bring to a marriage — a dowry, social status, domestic labor, business connections? What is her value to two families, the one she leaves and the one she joins? And what is the cost to the girl?

<https://www.darivoa.com/z/5921>

[Ivanka Trum](#) addresses the 1st Regional Conference for the Empowerment of Women in Afghanistan:

Peace, but not at Our Cost:

<https://www.pashtovoa.com/a/4563940.html>

Afghan American women fear the return of the Taliban.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1c5tc3hwgQ>

Ivanka Trump tweet facilitated U.S. visa for Afghan Girls Robotics Team, who were initially denied a visa a visa to travel to the United States.
<https://www.pashtovoa.com/a/3942207.html>

Interview with Zarina Ghafaari, after she received the Women of Courage award from U.S. secretary of State Mike Pompeo.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxEQ3U1MXLU&app=desktop%20-%20menu>

Shakila Zarin, Afghan refugee in Canada who was shot in the face by her husband, talked to VOA about her new life in the West and her experience from meeting Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a04pv5Fb5Y8&app=desktop%20-%20menu>

A man in Khost province donated his only piece of land for a girls' school.
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2293488194217899>

Pashtun American designe Nooria Farhad designs clothes and jewelry not only for the diaspora community but also for Hollywood celebrities.
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1189294847898282>

Bibi Shereena: A daily two-hour women-centric radio on TV (RoT) show:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzyP5sW7FfU&feature=youtu.be>

Obstacles that women writers and intellectuals face:
<https://www.dengiamerika.com/a/5353965.html>

Women in media and their effect on society:
<https://www.dengiamerika.com/a/5316192.html>

Women's role in media in Raqqa City:
<https://www.dengiamerika.com/a/5299533.html>

Women in media in Kurdish society:
<https://www.dengiamerika.com/a/journalism-kurdish-women/5276878.html>

Violence against women in Halabja:
<https://www.dengiamerika.com/a/violence-against-women-halabja/5131626.html>

The fight against ISIS and its impact on women:
<https://www.dengiamerika.com/a/iraq-kurdistan-kirkuk/5180012.html>

Threats that women face in Iraq:
<https://www.dengiamerika.com/a/4705709.html>

U.S. first lady Melania Trump and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo honored 12 women from around the world on March 4, 2020, with the International Women of Courage Award. VOA's Azerbaijani Service interviewed Shahla Humatova of Azerbaijan, one of the recipients of the award.

<https://www.amerikaninsesi.org/a/%C5%9F%C9%99hla-h%C3%BCmb%C9%99tova-c%C9%99sar%C9%99tji-qad%C4%B1nlar-beyn%C9%99lxalq-m%C3%BCkafat%C4%B1na-layiq-g%C3%B6r%C3%BCl%C3%BCb/5314467.html>

Feminist activists stage a protest in Baku against domestic violence and gender inequality:
<https://www.amerikaninsesi.org/a/bak%C4%B1da-8-mar%C5%9F-bizindir-h%C3%BCrr-k%C3%BC%C3%A7%C9%99l%C9%99r-%C5%9F%C3%BCar%C4%B1-ill%C9%99-feminist-h%C9%99r%C9%99kat%C4%B1-aksiya-ke%C3%A7iribl%C9%99r/5319942.html>

LEARNING ENGLISH

Let's Teach English: <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/p/6764.html>

The video series offers free online training for English-language educators worldwide. Based on the *Women Teaching Women English*, VOA and the University of Oregon are partners on this project. The course includes segments to show examples on classroom instructions and activities, lesson plans and a teachers' guide.

TOWN HALLS

VOA town halls expand the Agency's programming offerings to our global audiences in an effective participatory way. The town halls connect our international and diaspora audiences, focusing on major issues, allowing viewers to ask relevant questions and provide more in-depth discussions about specific topics of common interest. The town halls serve as a unique opportunity to use questions from the social media audience and from VOA media partners, and are aired by language service affiliates around the world.

NEWS CENTER

Coronavirus: Global Experts Answer Your Questions – A one-hour town hall focusing on the many concerns VOA's viewers have about COVID-19. The program was produced in mid-March and received more than 140,000 viewers for the Mandarin Service along with comments that it was unbiased and balanced.

https://youtu.be/ey9C4lyz_jI

Africa to America: The Odyssey of Slavery – On August 22, the Voice of America and Norfolk State University hosted an international town hall to discuss the 400th anniversary of the first Africans' landing in North America.

https://youtu.be/dX_tkBVH87k

Thinking Forward – A discussion with International Young leaders that gave VOA audiences insight into many issues confronting young people around the globe, including, poverty, employment and shortfalls in many countries.

<https://youtu.be/3oF5LnSoCGo>

Education Destination: USA – A town hall focusing on international students coming to American universities. In many parts of the world, U.S. institutions of higher education are considered the gold standard. Immigration bans prevented many foreign students from realizing their dream of attending a U.S. university or college.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Um7YW7y0ii4>

AFRICA DIVISION

COVID virtual town hall with a panel of health experts answering video questions from Africa. (English)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAF0KH03Gaw>

COVID virtual town hall with a panel of health experts answering video questions from Africa. (French)

Part 1 - <https://www.voafrique.com/a/5388987.html>

Part 2 - <https://www.voafrique.com/a/5391010.html>

COVID virtual town hall with a panel of health experts answering video questions from Africa. (Swahili)

Part 1 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IIS1fXGi4>

Part 2 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hww_RADMNag

COVID virtual town hall with a panel of health experts answering video questions from Africa. (Hausa)

Part 1 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSAgRMqMFVl>

Part 2 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ubr7iEOumzs&t=2s>

VOA Hausa organized an interfaith town hall in Abuja about divisions between Shia and Sunni Nigerians. Moderated by Hausa Chief Aliyu Mustapha, the panel included women leaders, Christian pastors and

police representatives discussing restrictions on public gatherings and efforts to dispel religious misinformation.

<https://www.voahausa.com/a/sashen-hausa-na-muryar-amurka-ya-gudanar-da-taron-hadin-kai-a-abuja/5095137.html>

In partnership with Norfolk State University, VOA held a town hall, *Africa to America: The Odyssey of Slavery*, marking the 400th anniversary of the first African slaves arriving in English-speaking America. (English)

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/voa-town-hall-looks-legacy-slavery-us-4005891>

VOA town hall at Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya on environment and energy issues.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nZhZJF4bdM&feature=emb_title

The U.S. and Africa: A Fellowship Inspiring Young Leaders town hall introduced members of the Mandela Washington Fellows for Young African Leaders Initiative and achievements from their time as part of the program.

<https://www.facebook.com/VOAStraightTalkAfrica/videos/1927873797518310/>

VOA and American University teamed up for a Straight Talk Africa town hall, *Martin Luther King: A Global Vision for Justice*, which explored little-known facts about the conscious connection between Dr. Martin Luther King and African leaders as they pursued their independence from colonial rule.

<https://www.facebook.com/VOAStraightTalkAfrica/videos/462765977570506/>

VOA and the Zimpapers Television Network teamed up for the first televised presidential debate ahead of Zimbabwe's first election since the fall of Robert Mugabe in November 2017.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/elected-zimbabwe-presidential-debate-straight-talk-africa-3784256>

VOA hosted a town hall aimed to demystify autism and deepen the understanding of challenges faced by families. Titled *Autism, Breaking the Silence*, the discussion was a special edition of Straight Talk Africa TV and included a panel of experts, doctors, and an in-studio audience of parents whose children have autism.

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/special-edition-straight-talk-africa-autism-breaking-silence-straight-talk-africa-3777481>

In partnership with INSEEC U., Voice of America held a screening of its documentary, *Beyond the Unicorn: Africans Making IT in Silicon Valley*, followed by a panel discussion examining the growth and challenges for African entrepreneurs on the continent and in Silicon Valley.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/4309890.html>

VOA Zimbabwe held a town hall, *Zimbabwe: The Way Forward*, focusing on the way forward for Zimbabwe following recent political developments, which led to the resignation of Robert Mugabe, who ruled Zimbabwe for more than 37 years.

<https://www.facebook.com/VOALiveTalk/videos/1739498246101167>

In the wake of the measles outbreak among Somali Americans in Minnesota in 2017, VOA's Somali Service hosted a town hall in Minneapolis, home to a large Somali-American population, to discuss the outbreak and address rumors in the community surrounding childhood vaccines and autism.

<https://www.voanews.com/science-health/voa-somali-town-hall-discusses-somali-measles-outbreak-us>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YviMe_YEL4&feature=youtu.be

VOA Somali organized a Somali-Canadian community town hall meeting in Toronto as part of a wider reporting effort on the issue of gang violence among Somali youth.
<https://www.voanews.com/americas/somali-canadian-community-discusses-causes-behind-rise-youth-gang-activity>

VOA Somali hosted a town hall linking the Somali diaspora in Minneapolis-Saint Paul with President of Somalia Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, during which members of the audience asked the President questions on extremism, unemployment and education. The program aired on Somali National Television and streamed live on the VOA Somali web and Facebook.
<https://www.facebook.com/108173635871713/videos/1191580704197662>

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC DIVISION

VOA Coronavirus Virtual Townhall: Global Experts Answer Your Questions (4/5/2020, 5/10/2020)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Kn-g6yZeXo>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86aY7Fq6gbo>

EURASIA DIVISION

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, VOA's Russian Service has been producing a weekly town hall-like digital program called *Discussion VOA* where the audience asks questions during a live show. Each week, experts join as live guests. The show on May 26, 2020, featured Drs. Alexander Ivanov from Brooklyn Methodist Hospital in New York (who recovered from COVID-19) and Boris Vinogradsky, founder of the Russian American Medical Association (RAMA), from Cleveland, Ohio.
<https://facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/175982630480708/>

LATIN AMERICA DIVISION

Forum with experts: "What will be the new normal after the pandemic" May 2020 – Voice of America held a virtual forum with three experts on: "What will be the new normal after the pandemic." The experts answered questions from our audience sent through social media and our affiliates.
<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/la-voz-de-am%C3%A9rica-te-explica-200381>

Voice of America Explains - COVID-19 Special - May 2020: As some states in the United States and countries gradually reopen their economies, thousands of people around the world wonder if it is time to do so. VOA talked to three experts, who analyze the protocols of the health system in the United States, how close we are to a vaccine and whether it is time to return to normality.
<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/la-voz-de-am%C3%A9rica-te-explica-especial-covid-19-202431>

Voice of America explains - COVID-19 Special - April 2020: Voice of America Spanish service conducted a special program answering our audience questions with Dr. Carmen Sofía Arriola, an epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States. She answers the most frequently asked questions from our audience.
<https://www.voanoticias.com/episode/la-voz-de-am%C3%A9rica-te-explica-y-responde-tus-preguntas-de-coronavirus-197471>

SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA DIVISION

Thinking Forward: A conversation with International Young Leaders (August 2018).

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/thinking-forward-discussion-international-young-leaders-3785161>

Being Young and Muslim in America – Social Media Segment was hosted by Urdu Service (June 2016).

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/whats-it-be-young-and-muslim-america>

Education Destination: USA (2017)

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=10154727772908074&ref=watch_permalink

The World Is Watching – Post-Presidential Debate Town Hall – Social media reactions presented by the Urdu Service.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6J0SN7bLzaU>

VOA Women’s Caucus hosts Roya Rahmani, Afghanistan’s Ambassador in Washington, D.C.:

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2277755579155520&ref=watch_permalink

VOA Women’s Caucus hosts members of the Afghan Girls Robotic Team organized by the South and Central Asia Division.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XwxZqL.Cwr6g>

VOA Afghan Service’s [antinarcotics town hall](#) in Balkh attended by 40 guests including Balkh Provincial Council Chief.

VOA PARTNERSHIPS

This Town Hall provided refugees in an African camp with the quintessential American forum to hold leaders accountable through direct questioning. Moderated by a former refugee, now a U.S. citizen, the Kakuma Camp Townhall was a partnership between the Voice of America and Chatham House/Moving Energy Initiative:

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/empowering-refugees-through-energy>

VOA MANDARIN COVERAGE – May 14, 2020**WEBSITE:**

State Department: WHO Should Invite Taiwan to Participate in WHA (web).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/state-dept-says-who-tedros-has-authority-to-invite-taiwanto-wha-20200513/5418622.html>

U.S. Government Pension Fund Halts Plan to Buy Chinese Stocks (web).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/pension-government-fund-coronavirus-20200513/5418754.html>

U.S. Government Warns COVID-19 Research Organizations of Being Targeted by Chinese Hackers (web).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/covid-us-china-cyberattacks-vaccine-20200513/5418580.html>

U.S. Special Forces Commander Made Remarks on Great Power Competition with China (web).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-special-forces-great-power-competition-20200513/5418552.html>

Educators Create Apps for Students with Hearing Disabilities (TV, web).

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/5419215.html>

Chinese Fake Vaccine Victims Call for NPC to Reform Vaccine Industry.

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/vaccine-victims-congresses-05142020/5419553.html>

Trump Says He's Very Disappointed in China.

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/trump-very-disappointed-china-20200514/5419591.html>

Beijing considers retaliation for U.S. coronavirus lawsuits, *Global Times* says.

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/china-considers-retaliation-US-coronavirus-lawsuits-global-times-20200514/5419737.html>

Taiwan says WHO has 'forgotten' neutrality by barring island.

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/taiwan-who-forgotten-neutrality-barring-island-20200514/5419608.html>

U.S. sails warship near Taiwan a week ahead of Taiwan's presidential Inauguration.

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/US-Sails-Warship-Near-Taiwan-A-Week-Ahead-Of-Presidential-Inauguration-20200514/5419490.html>

China to allow imports of barley, blueberries from United States.

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/china-imports-barley-blueberries-US-20200514/5419434.html>

Australia to buy 10 million coronavirus testing kits from China.

<https://www.voachinese.com/a/china-bgi-australian-foothold-mass-coronavirus-test-delivery-20200514/5419475.html>

SOCIAL MEDIA:

U.S. Senate Passes Uighur Human Rights Bill.

<https://twitter.com/VOAChinese/status/1261054156854435841>

U.S. President Trump commented on China WHO, and WTO.
<https://twitter.com/VOAChinese/status/1261058353582821376>

Senator Marco Rubio's comment on Taiwan and WHO.
<https://twitter.com/VOAChinese/status/1261108177397002240>

WTO chief Azevedo to step down a year early.
<https://twitter.com/VOAChinese/status/126111499956>

Taiwan says WHO has "forgotten" neutrality by barring island.
<https://twitter.com/VOAChinese/status/1260939849017839616>

U.N. / Guterres Mental Health COVID-19.
<https://twitter.com/VOAChinese/status/1260962366595969024>

Singapore's military launches mobile swab station for efficient virus testing.
<https://twitter.com/VOAChinese/status/1260998124438540289>

New Orleans virus patient released after 35 days.
<https://twitter.com/VOAChinese/status/1261121624268398592>

Australian Prime Minister Morrison on virus inquiry and China trade.
<https://twitter.com/VOAChinese/status/1261004215977160707>

TELEVISION:

Issues and Opinions: Will the rest of the world follow U.S. to decouple from Beijing?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9V1aZD6B6bM>

Issues and Opinions: NBA names new China CEO - Is it an attempt to kowtow to Beijing?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NeECUoHBmc>

Pro and Con: PLA's live fire drill ahead of Tsai's 520 Inauguration and USS McCampbell in Taiwan Strait.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-rcdhTf8dc>

Eye on America: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLmKjYF-0IU>
 Elements:

- 1) President Trump said that he's very disappointed in China and could "cut off the whole relationship"
- 2) Secretary of State Pompeo criticized China for not being transparent about COVID information
- 3) FED Chairman Powell warns economy may face extended period of weak growth
- 4) United Airlines: Management and Admin Team Could be Reduced in the Fall
- 5) Not only doctors but non-medical employees at hospitals face COVID risks every day
- 6) Two NY designers put business on hold to create PPE and jobs
- 7) Hardship bartender: Once Thriving Bartender Fears Homelessness
- 8) Healing Through Online Memorials: Coping with Grief in a Time of Pandemic
- 9) Forced to Stay Home, Neighbors Are Discovering Teddy Bears – and Each Other
- 10) Opening Society: A Smartphone App May Warn If You've Been Exposed to Coronavirus

VOA PERSIAN COVERAGE – June 4, 2020**WEBSITE:****U.S. News**

President trump on Michael White's release: his release showed a deal is possible.

<https://ir.voanews.com/persiannewsamerica/us-trump-iran-18>

Michael White's mother: With his release, the nightmare ended.

<https://ir.voanews.com/persiannewsiran/us-iran-michael-white>

A U.S. Official: Michael White was not a prisoner swap with Iran.

<https://ir.voanews.com/latestnews/us-white-asgari>

President Trump welcomes Releasing Michael White.

<https://ir.voanews.com/latestnews/us-iran-trump-11>

U.S. Congress Members thank the President's effort for White's release from Iran.

<https://ir.voanews.com/persiannewsamerica/us-iran-173>

Mike Pompeo: The battle with Islamic State continues until the terrorists are destroyed.

<https://ir.voanews.com/persiannewsamerica/pompey-isis-coalition>

U.S. Senate Sends Small-Business Loan Reform Bill to Trump.

<https://ir.voanews.com/home-page/us-senate-sends-small-business-loan-reform-bill-trump>

New Charges Filed in Death of George Floyd.

<https://ir.voanews.com/latestnews/new-charges-filed-death-george-floyd>

George Floyd tested positive for coronavirus but showed no symptoms, autopsy reveals.

<https://ir.voanews.com/persiannewsamerica/us-floyd-0>

U.S. Protesters Urge Police Reforms, Welcome Charges Against Three Officers in Floyd Case.

<https://ir.voanews.com/latestnews/us-protesters-urge-police-reforms-welcome-charges-against>

World

President Trump: It's "common sense" to invite Putin to G-7.

<https://ir.voanews.com/latestnews/us-trump-g7-putin>

U.S. to block Chinese airlines from flying into the U.S.

<https://ir.voanews.com/latestnews/us-china-airline>

Turkey's COVID-19 cases approach 166,000.

<https://ir.voanews.com/latestnews/turkey-virus-corona>

Israel's Knesset Meetings Canceled After Lawmaker Tests Positive.

<https://ir.voanews.com/persiannewsworld/israel-virus-corona>

U.S. Presses China for "Full Public Accounting" of 1989 Tiananmen Crackdown.

<https://ir.voanews.com/persiannews/world/us-presses-china-full-public-accounting-1989-tiananmen-crackdown>

Iran

Iran Coronavirus outbreak: More new cases, possible new wave.

<https://ir.voanews.com/persiannews/iran-coronavirus>

New Details on Massive Arrest in Khuzestan; Iran Wants to Spread Fear in Iranian Arabs.

<https://ir.voanews.com/persiannewsiran/iran-human-rights-226>

Bloomberg: Second Wave of COVID-19 Infections Hits Iran.

<https://ir.voanews.com/latestnews/iran-virus-corona>

Mustafa Badkobe Iranian poet was arrested and sent to prison.

<https://ir.voanews.com/persiannewsiran/iran-human-rights-227>

Health: How to protect ourselves when we are outside of the home.

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/توصیه‌رسانیه-امر یکایی-بیر ای-مقابله-با-شوو-ع-کر-ونا>

Citizen from Iran's Behbahan City explains how Iranian Official Ignores massive Fire in South of the Country.

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/iran-270001>

Volunteers Sweep Up Cities Mourning After Protests.

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/clean-walls-270012>

California Enters Phase 3 as Restaurants Reopen.

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-ca-270017>

Silicon Valley Entrepreneurs Reach Out to Help Venezuela.

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-venezuela-270451>

TELEVISION

8NEWS, 9NEWS and LATE NEWS

Michael White – U.S. Navy veteran Michael White released from prison in Iran after being detained for nearly two years.

<https://ir.voanews.com/top-stories/us-iran-hostage>

<https://ir.voanews.com/latestnews/us-iran-trump-11>

U.S. Iran – In a Senate session, Senator Jim Inhofe (R-OK) spoke about Khomeini on the 31-year anniversary of his passing, calling him "the ruthless face of an Iranian regime" that has been brutal to its own people and hates the freedoms that Americans enjoy.

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/republican-senator-270446>

Pompeo on China – U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo gives statement on the anniversary of Tiananmen Square. At the same time, U.S. banned Chinese airline flights to this country.

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/pompeo-china-270466>

Iran Corona – Increasing coronavirus cases in Iran seen as a sign of Iranian regime’s inability to control the virus.

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/iran-corona-270471>

Ted Cruz: Rioting Cannot be Tolerated – Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) condemned the violent riots that have broken out amidst peaceful protests following the death of George Floyd, saying this “terrorist assault” on the U.S. must be stopped.

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-cruz-270501>

20-minute Evergreen:

Iran Israel Media – Israel considering asylum requests from its Iran-based social media followers.

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/iran-israel-270511>

NYU Law Professor Explains President’s Power Under “Insurrection Act” – NYU law professor Richard Pliides provides an explanation of the Insurrection Act of 1871, which gives the POTUS broad powers in deploying military for enforcing the law in states.

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-protests-270516>

U.N.: Yemen Pledging Conference – in a virtual conference hosted by Saudi Arabia, UNSG Antonio Guterres, pointed to Yemen’s high mortality rate from COVID-19 and urged leaders of the world to donate.

Hong Kong Residents vow to remember Tiananmen – Hong Kong residents vow to remember Tiananmen, despite halts to vigils.

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/hongkong-protests-270521>

Italy Virus EU Flights – Italy resumes flights to EU as borders reopen

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/europe-flights-270531>

NFL 2020 – New season of NFL 2020 during COVID-19 era

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/us-nfl-270536>

LAST PAGE Special Segment – Bribery and widespread corruption continue in Khuzestan as news breaks of the owner of Iran’s sugar factory, Haft Tappeh, is cited in a bribing scandal with the governor of Khuzestan, as well as the son of the prosecutor general of Iran.

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/voa-lastpage-270541>

View From Washington – Presenting the U.S. view on religious freedom throughout the world, particularly in Iran. Explained that the U.S. will not waiver in its commitment to encourage all countries, including Iran, to recognize the fundamental importance of religious freedom to human life and dignity.

Straight Talk – Answering Audience Questions about the Coronavirus.

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/rwy-kht-263861>

VOA 365 News Bulletin 3

Plugged In with Greta Van Susteren (re-run):

<https://ir.voanews.com/watch/plugged-greta-van-susteren>

VOA 365 News Bulletin

VOA TEK

<https://ir.voanews.com/watch/voa-tek>

8PM NEWS LIVE

<https://ir.voanews.com/watch/news-8pm>

ABC Nightline

Tablet – Showcasing how the Iranian police have dealt with protesters since the first student uprising in 1999. The Interior Ministry of Iran finally announced that 230 people had been killed during the November protests. According to Reuters, 1,500 were killed. Investigating honor killings in Iran.

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/tblt-263871>

Citizen Watch

<https://ir.voanews.com/watch/citizen-watch>

Iran Video

Video of Iran Government Destroying a Person's House in Early Morning with Excuse of Illegal Construction:

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/iran-human-rights-270411>

Tehran-Shiraz Flight Issue and Passengers are Angry:

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/iran-flights-270421>

Iran Tomato Farmers riot closes a highway in Behbahn City:

<https://ir.voanews.com/episode/iran-farmers-270441>

VOA RUSSIAN COVERAGE – May 29, 2020

Live Video Stream (Golos Ameriki on Facebook, YouTube):

White House Presser – Live video with simultaneous translation into Russian of President Trump's news conference announcing the severing of ties with Hong Kong and the U.S. withdrawal from the WHO: <https://facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/922386341555903/>

Live video report on protests in Washington, D.C.:

<https://facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/251653606255122/>

Live TV Broadcast:

- Live *Current Time America* TV news program broadcast on the Current Time channel, and streamed live on VOA Russian social media platforms and website: <https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/309804336694496/> <https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/5441271.html>
- Reporter Mykhailo Komadovsky reported live on the news covering President Trump (remarks at the briefing on the hurricane season; phone call with Macron; Twitter flagged Trump's tweet on the protests in Minneapolis for 'glorifying violence' after he called protesters 'THUGS,' and suggested looting will lead to 'shooting'). The Friday news conference took place after the program.
- Minneapolis was rocked by a third night of protests on May 28 over the death of George Floyd, as thousands of demonstrators took to the streets. The death of an unarmed black man at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer has sparked protests in a number of major U.S. cities. At least seven people were shot in Louisville, Kentucky, as protesters turned out to demand justice for Breonna Taylor, a black woman fatally shot by police in her home in March. Reporter Vadim Allen files a report.
- Reporter Roman Mamonov interviewed a Russian-speaking journalist based in Minneapolis.
- Reporter Anush Avetisyan spoke to Michael Signer, the former mayor of Charlottesville, and Desmond Patton, Professor of Columbia, on the significance of the protests.
- President Trump signed an executive order on Thursday seeking to limit the broad legal protection that federal law currently provides to social-media and other online platforms, a move that is expected to draw immediate court challenges - days after Twitter called two of his tweets "potentially misleading." Comments by experts and covering the reaction. Original package by reporter Nataika Pisnya.
- On June 2, the District of Columbia along with seven other states will hold primary elections. While there is almost no political intrigue in the Democratic and Republican primaries, voting by mail has become the center of the political debate. The pandemic has pushed hundreds of thousands of voters across America to cast their ballots remotely, raising security concerns. VOA Russian talked to voters and experts about voting by mail and its impact on the elections: David Bryden, D.C. resident, voted by mail for the first time; Stan Veuger, American Enterprise Institute; Dan Thompson, Political Scientist, Stanford University; David Becker, Center for Election Innovation and Research; Lee Palmer, D.C. resident, League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia. Original package by reporter Daria Dieguts.
- The NSA warns of an ongoing Russian hacking campaign against U.S. systems. The NSA said the hacking activity was tied directly to a specific unit within Russia's Main Intelligence Directorate, also known as the GRU, named the Main Center for Special Technologies. The cybersecurity research community refers to this same hacking group as "Sandworm," and

has previously connected it to disruptive cyberattacks against Ukrainian electric production facilities. What are the dangers and implications? VOA Russian spoke to Alexander Crowther, cyber security expert at Florida International University; and Andy Greenberg, author of the book "SANDWORM: A New Era of Cyberwar and the Hunt for the Kremlin's Most Dangerous Hackers." Original package by reporter Alexander Yanevskyy.

- After Memorial Day celebrations, more and more states began to require wearing masks in public indoors places. Experts say that masks should be a requirement everywhere and it is one of the most effective ways to fight coronavirus. VOA Storyhunter reporter in Chicago asked people on the street why they wear/do not wear masks. VOA Russian's correspondent in Washington, D.C., went to the metro to see how people follow the requirement to wear masks. Original package by reporter Valentina Vasileva.

Other Broadcast TV (recorded on Fridays; air on the Current Time Channel on Saturday. Also posted on VOA Russian social media platforms and website.)

- ***Itogi*** (weekly analytical talk show that airs on the Current Time Channel on Saturday): The United States has had 100,000 deaths from coronavirus. States are starting to reopen. Russia is announcing reopening mid-June. Sweden reaches a record high number of deaths. How does the concept of herd immunity impact the reopening of different countries? Guests include: Anton Yuriev U.S. microbiologist, director of Elsevier, and Pyotr Topychkanov, Senior researcher at SIPRI, discuss the future of herd immunity.

The prosecutor in Moscow is calling for 18 years imprisonment of American Paul Whelan. His lawyer Karlova and sister Elizabeth Whelan talk about the case and their hopes and fears for justice in Russia.

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/itogi-may30/5441123.html>
<https://www.facebook.com/144776752025/videos/2717993305102153>

- ***Detali*** (weekly science and tech show that airs on the Current Time Channel on Saturday): This week's show focused on the historic SpaceX launch; a smartphone app that helps assess anemia by taking a picture of a person's eyelid; original package on the medical condition called synesthesia where one sense crosses with other senses (for example, letters, shapes, numbers can come with smell, color or flavor); original package about using drones for security at Arizona State University; coronavirus blood clot mystery and monkey lip smacks provide new insights into the evolution of human speech.

<https://www.facebook.com/144776752025/videos/255512062331153>

Social Media:

Daily VOA 60 news edition (Weekdays only):

<https://youtu.be/4NPYUuhWzIo>
<https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/526362888040822/>

Daily live video talk show – Social distancing, popular Russian actor Oleg Basilashvily:

<https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/2668499300083881/>

Video:

Science: Scientists discovered a virus that effectively infects malaria-carrying mosquitos exterminating them:

<https://facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/vb.144776752025/585831412354014/?type=2&theater> <https://youtu.be/F1lL5YE5sU>
<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/microbe-infected-mosquitoes-to-release-into-the-wild/5439852.html>

New York billboards turned black in solidarity with small business owners suffering an economic impact from the COVID-19 pandemic:

<https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/3166787800044414/>
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CAxzizlAKz7/>

Beauty salons opens up in Virginia after the restrictions for COVID-19 pandemics were partially lifted:

<https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/631517474438733/>
https://vk.com/videos-17853372?z=video-17853372_456249705%2Fclub17853372%2Fpl-17853372_-2
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CAyGnG5AoAT/>

A restaurant owner reinvented her business during quarantine restrictions by lowering down from a balcony homemade sandwiches in a basket for her online ordering clients:

<https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/617476865518635/>
<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/5441359.html>

As a number of states ease restrictions of COVID-19 quarantine, people are required to wear masks in public:

<https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/3279605122071597/>
<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/5441426.html>

Following the unrest in Minneapolis, National Guard soldiers deployed in the city:

<https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/341664876798720/>
https://vk.com/videos-17853372?z=video-17853372_456249707%2Fclub17853372%2Fpl-17853372_-2 <https://www.instagram.com/p/CAyPiCHgOP4/>

During the pandemic, people in Washington, D.C., prefer to vote via mail-in box:

<https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/692334798218701/>
<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/5441421.html>

Ukrainian jet fighters accompanied U.S. strategic bombers B-1B over Europe and the Black Sea for the first time for training purposes:

<https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/videos/280350946341406/> https://vk.com/videos-17853372?z=video-17853372_456249709%2Fclub17853372%2Fpl-17853372_-2
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CAyijj8o7QV/>

Expert Ariel Cohen on the protests in Minneapolis and Trump's policy towards China:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/ariel-cohen-5-29-2020/5441537.html>

Economy – New York Stock Exchange reaction on economic tension between Trump and China:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/economics-new-5-29-2020/5441414.html>

Twitter blocked Trump's tweet on Minnesota protest:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/trump-administration-news-5-29-2020/5441400.html>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CAyACUVikK9/>

Celebrities reaction on George Floyd death and the following protests:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/5441387.html>

Experts on protests in Minneapolis:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/5441351.html>

Protests over George Floyd death in different U.S. cities:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/5441349.html>

President Trump wants to charge social media companies for political censorship:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/5441489.html>

Interview with Popular Russian actor Oleg Basilashvily on Russian culture at the time of COVID-19:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CAyCXQOHdU7/>

Podcasts:

Znaem talk – podcast on the website and Facebook on Russian language:

https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/imena-v-poslovicah/5441342.html?fbclid=IwAR16DDLR8Z_qZRmrhTzH6-c-uhOZetfN1u8h-jl2wVBSpw5-n3195K4V1cQ

Photo news:

Minnesota governor deployed National guards during protests:

<https://facebook.com/golosameriki/photos/a.337240472025/10157190659212026/?type=3&theater>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CAxgBSADf15/>

NSA warned on Russian military intelligence hacking activity targeting Unix users:

<https://facebook.com/golosameriki/photos/a.337240472025/10157190701657026/?type=3&theater>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CAxiCq1D103/>

CNN crew covering protests in Minneapolis arrested by police during live broadcast:

<https://www.facebook.com/golosameriki/photos/a.337240472025/10157191371517026/?type=3&theater>

Golos Ameriki website: <https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/>

News and reports

President Trump announced Friday that the U.S. is "terminating" its relationship with the WHO over its failure to enact reforms in the face of concerns over its handling of the coronavirus pandemic and its pro-China bias:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/trump-friday-statement/5441430.html>

American Paul Whelan, who has been locked up in Russia for nearly two years, received emergency surgery on Thursday evening:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/paul-whelan-make-hart-operation-in-moskow/5441062.html>

One in four Russians Believe Coronavirus Pandemic 'Made-Up' – Poll:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/expert-on-russian-mentality/5440643.html>

Russia during the pandemic: reaction and scenarios:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/life-and-politics-in-pandemia/5441059.html>

European Union and U.S. aid Ukraine's economy:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/ukraine-eu-economic-aid/5441204.html>

Germany's Foreign Ministry chides Russian ambassador in Berlin for hacking attack:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/germany-summons-russian-ambassador-over-hacking/5440601.html>

Russian intelligence unit GRU is engaged in an ongoing email hacking campaign, the National Security Agency announced:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/nsa-issues-public-warning-about-gru-hackers/5440598.html>

China warns of the possibility of using force to prevent Taiwan independence:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/china-warns-of-force-if-taiwan-becomes-independent/5440678.html>

San Francisco will allow outdoor dining and indoor shopping, religious services and sporting events:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/san-francisco-to-ease-coronavirus-restrictions/5440642.html>

Turkey will open restaurants and beaches and end travel restrictions between cities on June 1:

<https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/turkey-to-lift-coronavirus-restrictions/5440651.html>

