

(U) Information Report: Review of Allegations Related to the U.S. Agency for Global Media's Personnel Suitability and National Security Program, AUD-SI-IB-22-01

(U) December 2021

(U) Summary of Review

~~(SBU)~~ On January 14, 2021, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM)¹ sent a letter to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) alleging that USAGM senior management did not fully address "persistent security problems" in USAGM's personnel suitability and national security program. The CEO stated that these deficiencies were identified in multiple assessments conducted by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) between 2010 and 2020. Furthermore, he stated that ~~Provided by ODNI~~ ~~Provided by ODNI~~ yet, USAGM continued to grant access, security clearances, and suitability determinations that were ~~Provided by ODNI~~ ~~Provided by ODNI~~ ² The CEO requested that OIG investigate these "exceptionally serious issues at USAGM."

~~(SBU)~~ OIG conducted this review to determine whether USAGM employees received valid suitability and national security determinations and whether USAGM has a process to ensure that newly hired employees receive valid suitability and national security determinations. OIG found that ~~Provided by ODNI~~ ~~Provided by ODNI~~ ³ which are the U.S. Government's Suitability and Credentialing Executive Agent and Security Executive Agent responsible for overseeing agencies' personnel suitability and national security programs.⁴ Specifically, according to ~~Provided by OPM; (b)(5)~~ ~~Provided by OPM; (b)(5)~~ ~~Provided by ODNI~~

¹ (U) The CEO, Michael Pack, resigned on January 20, 2021.

² (U) OIG provided a draft copy of this report to ODNI for comment. On October 6, 2021, OIG received a response from the Chief of the Personnel Security Group, Special Security Directorate, National Counterintelligence and Security Center. ODNI requested redaction of these sections be redacted. This information was marked Unclassified//FOUO – a marking that prevents them from being included in an UNCLASSIFIED document intended for public release.

³ (U) See footnote 2.

⁴ (U) Executive Order 13467, as amended, Reforming Processes Related to Suitability for Government Employment, Fitness for Contractor Employees, and Eligibility for Access to Classified National Security Information, June 30, 2008.

⁵ ~~(SBU)~~ ~~Provided by OPM; (b)(5)~~ ~~Provided by~~

⁶ (U) OPM, *Follow-Up Review of the U.S. Agency for Global Media Suitability Program 27* (July 2020).

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(SBU) ~~(SBU)~~ OIG's review also found, however, that USAGM had taken or was taking corrective action to address these issues. For example, in 2018, ~~(SBU)~~ **Provided by OPM; (b)(5)**

~~(SBU)~~ **Provided by OPM; (b)(5)** ⁹ USAGM transferred its investigations for newly hired employees and reinvestigations of current employees to the Department of Defense's Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA). From 2018 to April 2021, DCSA scheduled 2,021 investigation requests from USAGM and closed 1,747 of these investigations. According to a USAGM official, all reinvestigations, ~~(SBU)~~ **Provided by ODNI**

~~(SBU)~~ **Provided by ODNI** ¹⁰ have since been completed by DCSA. In addition, USAGM transferred adjudication¹¹ responsibilities to OPM and the General Services Administration. Furthermore, USAGM drafted an alternative investigative program for foreign nationals who do not meet the 3-year residency requirement. According to USAGM officials, the alternative investigative program had subsequently been approved by ODNI and was awaiting approval from OPM, as of September 2021. In the interim, USAGM may hire foreign nationals who do not meet the 3-year residency requirement if they can conduct their work without access to USAGM facilities or IT systems.

(U) According to OPM and ODNI officials, USAGM has made progress in addressing deficiencies previously reported about USAGM's personnel suitability and national security program. This progress includes ensuring applicable USAGM employees receive valid suitability and national security determinations. OPM and ODNI officials stated that they are closely monitoring USAGM's progress in addressing the identified deficiencies. Furthermore, the new suitability and national security determination processes used by USAGM for U.S. citizens have been approved by OPM (suitability) and ODNI (national security). Because of the actions taken by USAGM, along with OPM and ODNI's monitoring of USAGM's progress, OIG is not making any recommendations related to this issue.

(U) In USAGM's response to a draft of this report, the Acting CEO stated that "USAGM had been working in earnest, going back to at least 2018 (well before Mr. Pack arrived at the agency), to implement actions to address open recommendations from OPM and ODNI

⁷ (U) ODNI, *Security Executive Agent National Assessment Program Final Report on the U.S. Agency for Global Media Personnel Security Program 8* (September 2019).

⁸ (U) See footnote 2.

⁹ (SBU) ~~(SBU)~~ **Provided by OPM; (b)(5)**
~~(SBU)~~ **Provided by OPM; (b)(5)**

¹⁰ (U) See footnote 2.

¹¹ (U) ODNI's Security Executive Agent Directive 4, "National Security Adjudicative Guidelines," 6 (June 8, 2017) states that adjudication is an examination "to make an affirmative determination that the individual is an acceptable security risk."

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audits.” Additionally, the Acting CEO noted that “USAGM’s workforce is predominantly working journalists – who, like any other journalists, rely on access to open source information. Their workspaces are newsrooms . . . , and they do not use, store, or have access to classified information. This bears mentioning so that stakeholders or external audiences understand the context of this matter and do not get the wrong impression of our operation.” USAGM’s response to a draft of this report is reprinted in its entirety in Appendix B.

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