



U.S. Embassy Podgorica, Montenegro

## December 2020\*

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In December 2020, a former grant recipient pled guilty to misappropriating \$775,000 in Department grant funds for his own purposes. OIG special agents determined the recipient falsely certified that he had complied with the terms and conditions of three grants he was awarded to build media operations centers in Afghanistan. Instead, the recipient sent much of the money to persons and entities unrelated to the grants. Sentencing is pending.

In December 2020, a company owner pleaded guilty to a wire fraud charge in connection with federal contracts to provide helmets, body armor, and other items to military and other federal entities. OIG special agents, in a joint investigation with General Services Administration OIG and other agencies, determined the company falsified information to circumvent the Trade Agreements Act. The owner also pleaded guilty to illegal possession of a firearm by a prohibited person. Sentencing is pending.

In December 2020, a company president and three of his employees pled guilty to conspiring to defraud the United States. OIG special agents, in a joint investigation with the Defense Criminal Investigative Service and other agencies, determined that the company falsely declared goods pertaining to Department contracts to evade the Buy America Act. The co-workers would fraudulently import goods into the United States that were made in prohibited countries, then falsely relabel these goods as if they were made in the United States. Sentencing is pending.

### SPOTLIGHTS ON SUCCESS

#### Translating Journalistic Standards into Key Local Languages Promoted Awareness, Reinforced Credibility

*(Targeted Inspection of the U.S. Agency for Global Media: Journalistic Standards and Principles, ISP-IB-21-06)*

The U.S. Agency for Global Media’s five networks use 61 languages to communicate with audiences worldwide. Several networks translated journalistic standards into local languages to improve awareness of those standards both among employees whose native language is not English and to their target audiences. In the case of Voice of America, these translations were done by individual language services, such as the Spanish Service’s version of the Best

### RECOMMENDATIONS STATUS

as of December 31, 2020

<b>596**</b> Open Recommendations	<b>37</b> Recommendations Closed During November
--------------------------------------	---

[View Latest Monthly Recommendation Reports](#)

[View Report Highlights](#)

\*\*Classified recommendations are not included in these totals because of delays in preparing classified materials due to OIG’s effort to maximize telework and social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Practices Guide or translations of the Journalistic Code into Albanian and Macedonian. At Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, the network translated portions of its policy manual into Russian, including journalistic, ethical, and social media principles. The Middle East Broadcasting Networks’ intranet site contained its Journalistic Code of Ethics and other standards guidance materials translated into Arabic as a professional resource for employees. At Radio Free Asia (RFA), several services, such as the Burmese, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Mandarin, and Vietnamese, had translated the RFA Code of Ethics. Network leadership told OIG they believed this practice helped establish and reinforce their credibility and trustworthiness as news organizations while also modeling and promoting journalistic standards with audiences in countries where those principles are absent or at risk.

### NEW WORK STARTED

- *Audit of Selected Grants and Cooperative Agreements Administered by the Public Affairs Section at U.S. Embassy Kabul, Afghanistan*
- *Review of Department of State 2020 Drug Control Funds and Related Performance Reports for the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)*

\*Please note that the title of the monthly update now corresponds to the month of activity being reported. Previously, the title included the month the update was issued.

- *Audit of Nonexpendable Personal Property at U.S. Embassy Baghdad, Iraq*
- *Audit of the Acquisition Planning and Contract Extensions of Iraq Support Services Contracts While Preparing for the Transition to the Worldwide Diplomatic Support Services Contract*
- *Audit of Department of State FY 2020 Compliance With the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019*
- *Audit of Compliance With the Cost-Sharing Requirements for Selected Department of State Grants and Cooperative Agreements*
- *Review of Department of State Foreign Assistance Tracking Capabilities (ISP-I-21-09)*
- *Management Assistance Report: Representational Travel by the Spouse of the Secretary of State (ESP-21-01)*
- *Management Assistance Report: The Bureau of Diplomatic Security Did Not Always Conduct Post Security Program Reviews Within Required Timeframes (AUD-SI-21-03)*
- *Management Assistance Report: The Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Compliance Process Related to Post Security Program Reviews Needs Improvement (AUD-SI-21-04)*

## REPORTS ISSUED

- *Classified Inspection of Consulate General Hamilton, Bermuda (ISP-S-21-03)*
- *Targeted Inspection of the U.S. Agency for Global Media: Journalistic Standards and Principles (ISP-IB-21-06)*
- *Management Assistance Report: Continued Deficiencies in Performance of Information Systems Security Officer Responsibilities at Overseas Posts (ISP-21-07)*
- *Information Report: Review of the Department of State Compliance With Executive Order 13950 on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping (AUD-MERO-21-11)*
- *Information Report: Review of the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, U.S. Section, Compliance With Executive Order 13950 on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping (AUD-CGI-21-12)*
- *Information Report: Review of the U.S. Agency for Global Media Compliance With Executive Order 13950 on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping (AUD-CGI-21-14)*



The Office of Inspector General conducts independent oversight of the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for Global Media on behalf of American taxpayers to:

- Promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.
- Prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse.
- Identify vulnerabilities and recommend constructive solutions.

Report waste, fraud, or abuse 24 hours a day to the OIG hotline: [www.stateoig.gov/HOTLINE](http://www.stateoig.gov/HOTLINE)