



Stop the Coup 2025
a public education and mobilization campaign

CHAPTER 8 . MEDIA AGENCIES . US AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA Author: **Mora Namdar**, attorney, and Senior Fellow at the American Foreign Policy Council; former vice-president of the USAGM; former Senior Advisor, Dept. of State; with input from **Victoria Coates, Michael Pack, Frank Wuco**, “and several brave whistleblowers.”

The mission of the USAGM is to inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy, but, Namdar argues, execution is lacking. The USAGM must be reformed top to bottom by the White House and Congress, she recommends. If that’s not possible, the media agency should be defunded and shut down. She argues that the USAGM has lost its basic propaganda mission of telling America’s story abroad; instead, it too often carries critical views of America.

The USAGM oversees the Voice of America (VOA) and the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB) and 100% of the funding for the Middle East Broadcasting Network (MBN), Radio Free Asia (RFA), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), and the newly formed Open Technology Fund (OTF).

Namdar says the VOA has lost its formerly good reputation by broadcasting “flagrantly political content,” while the OCB has suffered from limited budget and some voices too empathetic to the Cuban Communist regime. Other problems are duplications of content at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and security risks that have plagued the radio network, while financial corruption has affected Radio Free Asia. Meanwhile, the OTF is deemed wasteful -- “a boondoggle.”

The main critique of the USAGM is poor oversight of journalists who tout anti-American propaganda by giving voice to critics, versus their mission of promoting American propaganda. Another is the Biden administration’s reversal of personnel decisions made by Trump. Namdar asserts that former and current USAGM/VOA leadership engaged in “near-daily” attacks on the efforts of the Trump administration and its appointees to carry out reforms of these institutions. USAGM higher ups sided with mainstream media organizations’ “anti-US chorus and denigrating the American story—all in the name of so-called journalistic independence.” The USAGM is also vulnerable to exploitation by foreign spies, Namdar charges, and too many personnel are not properly vetted for security clearances.

Other criticisms:

- ✓ The US has invested in web-based technologies, overlooking durable and valuable non-web technologies such as shortwave radio transmission stations that can serve where Internet access is limited. Plus, undersea cables (internet) are vulnerable to damage, especially during major conflict
- ✓ The USAGM should report to the president and be overseen by the National Security Council, but lacks such supervision
- ✓ The VOA should be put under the NSC’s oversight, or in the Office of Global Public Affairs at the Department of State, an agency created under the Trump administration



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- ✓ The Smith–Mundt Act stipulates that USAGM services are meant to tell the American story abroad only, but the agency used its taxpayer funding to promote pro-Biden partisan messaging domestically

Namdar advocates for a complete overhaul of the USAGM, including reforms to address the points above, with help from (conservative) industry groups, nonprofits, trade associations, foundations, and activist organizations, for example, America First Legal Foundation, USAGM Watch, BBG-USAGM Watch, and Whistleblower Protection Project.

Corporation for Public Broadcasting: Federal funding should be cut from PBS due to its liberal bias, contends Namdar, writing, “PBS and NPR do not even bother to run programming that would attract conservatives,” and “PBS has a 67% liberal and 12% conservative audience.” To do this, “the 47th President can just tell the Congress -- through the budget he proposes and through personal contact -- that he will not sign an appropriation spending bill that contains a penny for the CPB,” although heavy pushback should be anticipated from a team of PBS lobbyists.

While the public broadcast corporations would likely remain in business, due to membership models of corporate and nonprofit financial support, federal defunding would strip them of their status as noncommercial education (NCE) stations and thus access to FCC’s “left of the dial” lower-end frequency channels that allow for long-distance FM broadcasting. It would force them to pay regulatory fees for NCE television broadcast station licenses for which they are now exempt as NCEs. Finally, Namdar calls for the president to instruct the FCC to exclude PBS and NPR stations.

STC 2025 Commentary: Namdar, who served as VP of USAGM, is thoroughly critical of the USAGM, which was set up to oversee production and distribution of “pro-America” propaganda abroad, but, she feels, has too often broadcast programs and content that are critical of Trump or conservative viewpoints, and are vulnerable to infiltration by “anti-American” spies – a national security issue. Her complaint is that USAGM leadership are often operating like the mainstream media – in other words, too independently. Her call is to reclaim control of America’s media mouthpiece to serve Trump’s and a conservative ideological foreign policy agenda – or totally silence it.

The singular goal of Namdar’s call to strip federal funding from PBS and NPR – a familiar one for conservatives – is to help reduce and silence mainstream media, liberal and left voices, and stories from the US radio airwaves. Defunding and loss of NCE status would impose new financial challenges on these public broadcast stations, and would also negatively impact left-of-center Pacifica Radio. With this move, conservatives also seek to reduce secular educational programming on lower-frequency FM stations with longer reach to public audiences.

Chapter 8 - Key Points

- ✓ The USAGM and VOA need a complete reform – or be eliminated if that’s not possible



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- ✓ The president and NSC should have oversight of the USAGM, or alternatively, the State Department's Office of Global Public Affairs at the Department of State to assure messaging does not reflect any enemy "anti-American" messaging
- ✓ The National Security Council should oversee VOA content
- ✓ USAGM employees need better vetting; the agency is vulnerable to foreign spies
- ✓ The USAGM should never be used for domestic broadcast, only foreign
- ✓ Federal funding to PBS should be cut on grounds it has liberal bias
- ✓ Abolish federal funding to strip PBS, NPR (and Pacifica Radio) of noncommercial education (NCE) status as "left of the dial" stations with longer, low-frequency reach
- ✓ This would force the stations to pay regulatory fees not paid by NCE stations