



Written by [Paul Dragu](#) on March 17, 2025

## Trump Guts International Propaganda Agencies

The Trump administration has made another good move for reasons likely not entirely noble.

President Donald Trump signed an [executive order](#) Friday gutting the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), the parent agency of America's international propaganda network comprising Voice of America (VOA), Office of Cuba Broadcasting, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Free Asia.

Trump's executive order mandates that USAGM be reduced "to the minimum presence and function required by law." This approach of nearly but not completely eliminating the organization is another attempt to obliterate a government agency that was created through an act of Congress by sidestepping Congress to do so.



Kari Lake/X  
Kari Lake, USAGM senior advisor

Michael Abramowitz, the agency's director, said in a statement afterward, "For the first time in 83 years, the storied Voice of America is being silenced." More than 1,300 journalists, producers and staff at VOA received an email informing them they were put on administrative leave Saturday, Abramowitz wrote on his private Facebook page. Employees said they lost access to their work email and other communications programs, according to reports. Some VOA radio frequencies in Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere went dark.

### Wasteful Radical Propaganda

A [White House press release](#) about the move explains the motivation behind Trump's action.

For starters, it aims to relieve taxpayers from funding "radical propaganda." VOA veteran journalist Dan Robinson is cited as saying:

I have monitored the agency's bureaucracy along with many of its reporters and concluded that it has essentially become a hubris-filled rogue operation often reflecting a leftist bias aligned with partisan national media. It has sought to avoid accountability for violations of journalistic standards and mismanagement.

Other reasons listed in the press release include:

- VOA's management told staffers not to refer to Hamas members as terrorists;
- VOA reporters have posted anti-Trump content on their social media pages, apparently in violation of policy forbidding political partiality;
- VOA misallocated funds and suppressed negative news stories about Iran;
- The agency published an [article](#) legitimizing the white privilege narrative; and



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- VOA disseminated messages opposed to American interests. This [complaint](#) is based a lawsuit filed by the American Accountability Foundation, a political watchdog. They claim that VOA ignored 60 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests related to an investigation into allegations that the agency was pushing “anti-American and pro-Islamist” reporting.

In October 2020, VOA published an [article](#) essentially downplaying the authenticity of the Hunter Biden laptop. VOA also [fired reporters](#) for conducting an interview with a Chinese dissident who criticized the Chinese government. And in 2019, VOA [published a segment](#) designed to create sympathy for transgender illegals seeking asylum in the United States.

## **Kari Lake Exposes “Colossal Waste of Money”**

Kari Lake, Trump’s senior advisor at USAGM, posted a video on her X account the day of the announcement, focusing on the organization’s waste. “I’m horrified at some of the things I’m learning about this agency,” she said. She then said that the Joe Biden administration signed a \$250 million lease on a lavish Washington, D.C., skyscraper to be used by USAGM. “This building is a colossal waste of money,” Lake said while images of conference rooms with wall-to-wall windows, massive waterfalls throughout the building, Italian marble floors, and leather furniture galore are shown. The kicker, Lake added, is that USAGM already has a building — one that is paid off.

Lake mentioned another piece of information sure to enrage anyone who watched her video after agonizing over paying \$5 for a dozen eggs. Before leaving, the Biden administration changed USAGM contracts to make it harder for the incoming administration to trace the money. She said:

We are seeing grants where they’ve taken the grants and they’ve changed the contracts just days before we got in here, to make it less transparent for us to find out where the money is going and what’s happening with these grantees. It was an obvious, obvious sign that they wanted to keep us from finding out anything that we could possibly go in and change and make better for the American taxpayer.

MUST SEE: America, how do you feel about leasing a fancy Washington DC high-rise for a quarter of \$1 billion?

That’s exactly what the last administration did at the US Agency for Global Media. [@KariLake](#) exposes waste & corruption, and will work to root it out.

WATCH & SHARE!... [pic.twitter.com/8Zs5XhKV3I](https://pic.twitter.com/8Zs5XhKV3I)

— Kari Lake (@KariLake) [March 14, 2025](#)

Legal challenges will almost assuredly be brought against the Trump administration for this action. David Z. Seide is a lawyer at the Government Accountability Project who represents some Voice of America journalists. [According to](#) *The New York Times*:

Mr. Seide said he was considering legal challenges aimed at reinstating Voice of America journalists. The American Foreign Service Association, whose ranks include Voice of



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America employees, [said it](#) “will mount a vigorous defense” of those employees.

## Reactions From the Left, Right

Response to VOA’s diminishment were as expected.

Of course, to the Left, VOA was a valuable presenter of “‘a balanced and comprehensive’ portrait of America.” And according to the *Times*, it served as a “reliable source of news” around the world. The reporters presumably said this with a straight face.

Others believe this latest move is another effort by the Trump administration to weaken the news media. For instance, The Associated Press [reported](#) that Reporters Without Borders

condemns this decision as a departure from the U.S.’s historic role as a defender of free information and calls on the U.S. government to restore VOA and urges Congress and the international community to take action against this unprecedented move.

And National Press Club President Mike Balsamo [said](#):

For decades, Voice of America has provided fact-based journalism to millions. Now, after its parent agency was gutted, its journalists are being sidelined en masse.

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This raises urgent questions about the future of press freedom.

Full [@PressClubDC](#) statement: [pic.twitter.com/tUJsX9U8fe](https://pic.twitter.com/tUJsX9U8fe)

— Mike Balsamo (@MikeBalsamo1) [March 15, 2025](#)

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s president and CEO, Stephen Capus, [said](#) in a statement that cancelling his network’s “grant agreement would be a massive gift to America’s enemies.”

Others had a less favorable view of VOA and more favorable one of its diminution.

Xi Van Fleet, someone familiar with tyranny, [recounted](#) on her X account how VOA has changed over time:

Under Mao, listening to Voice of America (VOA) was a crime punishable by death. Yet, many people still risked their lives to tune in, seeking real information from America — the land of freedom. When the ban was finally lifted, VOA became a vital part of my college life. But over the decades, VOA, like all other American institutions, has been heavily infiltrated by American Marxists, transforming it into a propaganda machine against America. This shift is particularly evident in its Mandarin service, which has become a tool of the Chinese Communist Party.



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Social media influencer Ian Miles Cheong applauded the move, [tweeting](#) on Saturday:

Journalists who showed up at the Voice of America today to broadcast their programs found themselves locked out and given termination notices. In addition, every contractor and international broadcaster funded by the organization has had their contracts severed indefinitely. ...Well done, DOGE!

And the American Media Council posted on X:

If Americans' tax dollars are funding global news organizations, they should be reporting the truth. Instead, we've seen outlets like Voice of America abuse their funding to spread Fake News that contradicts both American policy and the truth. The day of reckoning is here for VOA, and the mainstream media is losing their minds over it.

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The day of reckoning is here... <https://t.co/11xQfpJ7JA>

— American Media Council (@AmerMediaCncl) [March 15, 2025](#)

## Should Taxpayers Fund ANY Propaganda?

This reaction raises the question: Should American taxpayers fund any propaganda, “good” or bad?

Voice of America began broadcasting in 1942. It was part of a U.S. government effort to neutralize Nazi propaganda around the world. During the Cold War, its radio broadcasts behind the Iron Curtain were part of the U.S. government's campaign to counter communism.

Those who approve of gutting these agencies, including the White House administration, appear to do so because VOA has strayed from its mission of broadcasting pro-American and pro-democracy propaganda.

But why should American taxpayers pay for any propaganda? There are zero clauses in the U.S. Constitution allowing for the production of international (or domestic) propaganda. The legal justification, for some, comes from that all-encompassing, exhaustive general welfare clause that seems to cover a litany of programs and policies the Founding Fathers are rolling in their graves over.

Perhaps Connor O’Keeffe of the Mises Institute [said it best](#):

Voice of America absolutely should go away. Employees and supporters of VOA like to describe the outlet's purpose as providing “objective” and “balanced” reporting on current events. But dig a little deeper and you'll find out that what VOA staffers are really passionate about is “promoting democracy” abroad and helping in a global fight against authoritarianism. ... It's a propaganda outlet that we're all forced to fund. It is one part of



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the broader regime change apparatus that got a lot of exposure earlier in the year with the gutting of USAID. Funding foreign propaganda campaigns is not our responsibility. Your average American family does not have a moral obligation to send part of their paycheck to try and turn people in Belarus against their government.



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