

**Testimony of Mr. Michael Pack**  
**Broadcasting Board of Governors CEO Nominee**  
**before the**  
**United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**September 19, 2019**

Good Morning Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished Members of the Committee. It is an honor to be with you today as the President's nominee to serve as CEO of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, recently re-named the U.S. Agency for Global Media. As you all know, this is a new position, and I want to thank the Committee for having had the foresight and vision to create it.

With me today is my wife of soon to be 33 years, Gina Cappel Pack; she is my business partner and my closest confidant. Our anniversary is tomorrow. The oldest of my three sons, William, is also in the audience. I want to thank Gina, William and my entire family for their support and encouragement. Let me also thank my good friend Ambassador Paula Dobriansky for making time to introduce me today.

I have a long love affair with international broadcasting. In 1992, my wife and I were living Los Angeles and running our independent film company. We had recently bought a new home in the Hollywood Hills with a lovely view. My wife was eight months pregnant with our first child, William. Our life was very much on track.

Then, I received a call from the U.S. Information Agency asking if I would serve as Director of Worldnet, which is now the television component of the Voice of America. The biggest event of my life – the end of the Cold War – was recent history, and the VOA had helped bring that about. Now, I could be part of this storied institution and

help it bring free media and fact-based reporting to the now newly-liberated states of the former Soviet Union, and rest of the world. Without hesitation, my very pregnant wife and I rerouted our lives, sold our home, moved to DC, and never looked back.

Since then, I have been a participant, an observer, and a fan of international broadcasting. I have never wavered in my admiration and support of its mission and the men and women who work so hard to fulfill it.

Let me tell you a little about myself. I was born and raised in New York City, where I started my film company – Manifold Productions – in 1977. As I said, we moved to LA in 1988, and then to DC in 1992. I have produced more than 15 documentaries which have been nationally broadcast on PBS, all received favorable reviews and excellent ratings.

Our films tell America's story – also one of the goals of international broadcasting. The stories we've told range from history to politics to culture. We've made films about our nation's founding fathers, the entertainment industry, the history of America's political parties, Congress, great engineers and scientists, and much more.

In addition to my documentary filmmaking, I have served as a senior executive in media companies, gathering experience managing journalists, writers, professors, staff and others. Often, I have had to restructure and move these organizations in new directions.

I've already mentioned my time serving as Director of Worldnet under President George H.W. Bush. I reported to both the Director of the U.S. Information Agency and the Director of the Voice of America and managed a staff of 291, mostly civil servants but also contractors and foreign service officers. During my time there, we were able to

more fully integrate Worldnet with the VOA, producing their first ever collaboration, a weekly public affairs television series for Ukraine. And, I forged life-long friendships that continue to enrich my life today.

After leaving Worldnet, I took what I had learned about international broadcasting to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and launched, with Paula Dobriansky, the International TV Council, geared to arranging co-productions between American producers and their counterparts in the former Soviet Union, to aid in their transition to independent, free media.

Years later, in 2003, I returned to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting as the Senior Vice President of Television Production. Part of my mission was to launch new programming initiatives, which CPB had not done in many years. The first was *America at a Crossroads*, a series of prime-time documentaries examining challenges facing America after September 11<sup>th</sup>, from a variety of perspectives. The second was the *History and Civics* initiative, employing all media, from traditional TV to video games, to address middle and high schoolers' declining knowledge of our nation's past. Both these initiatives, in their way, focused on telling America's story.

In between my stints at CPB, I was nominated by President George W. Bush and confirmed by the Senate to serve on the Council of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Most recently, I was the President and CEO of the Claremont Institute, a think tank based in Southern California. The Institute is dedicated to restoring the principles of the American Founding to the rightful, preeminent authority in our national life. I opened the Institute's first Washington, D.C. office and its first communications department, which

significantly raised the profile of the Institute. And under my direction, we launched a website based on its flagship publication, the *Claremont Review of Books*.

My many years running Manifold Productions, in between these other professional opportunities, has provided varied and relevant management experience. Each film produced is like launching a mini-company, with 50 to 75 associates, from journalists and historians to film professionals and other experts, all working on it at one time or other over several years. In addition to the creative work, my wife and I are responsible for all business functions, from raising and managing the finances to marketing and development and we have run this successful small business for over 30 years.

Although making documentaries is very satisfying work, I feel called back to international broadcasting again, just as I was originally called in 1991, though this time my wife is not pregnant, and we don't have to move three thousand miles.

America's adversaries have stepped up their propaganda and disinformation efforts. They are aggressively promoting their very different visions of the world. Consider this famous quote from Abraham Lincoln's first debate with Senator Stephen Douglas, "Public sentiment is everything. With it, nothing can fail; against it, nothing can succeed. Whoever molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces judicial decisions."

Although Lincoln had democratic America in mind, in today's connected age, molding global public sentiment matters. As Lincoln would have counseled, we need to counter lies with the truth. We need to make clear to the world the ideals America strives to live up to. That is the mission of the U.S. Agency for Global Media. I would be honored to assist in that noble effort.

If confirmed, I would have three goals: The first is to raise employee morale at the Agency. USAGM consistently ranks at the bottom in surveys of mid-sized Agencies in terms of morale and job satisfaction. I will make it a priority to improve morale. . The second is addressing the scandals besetting USAGM. In recent years, the Agency has been rocked by a series of scandals including accusations of bribery, anti-Semitism, and malfeasance by a senior official. I will make certain that the Agency is doing everything it can to make sure such scandals cease and put processes in place to prevent such situations in the future. Third, and most importantly, my mission will be to make the Agency more effective. There was bi-partisan support to create this new CEO position and to replace the existing Broadcasting Board of Governors. The hope was that a CEO would provide the leadership and vision to help ramp up the impact of the five broadcasting entities and to create a more effective U.S broadcasting effort on the world stage. Fulfilling that hope won't be easy or fast. I will confer extensively with the talented and dedicated men and women of USAGM and will consult with all stakeholders, most definitely including here in Congress. So, you will be hearing from me often.

Thank you for your time this morning. I look forward to answering your questions.