

## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

October 31, 2018

John F. Lansing  
Chief Executive Officer  
U.S. Agency for Global Media  
330 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20237

Dear CEO Lansing,

I write with deep alarm and concern over a May 2018 video segment from the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB) focused on U.S. citizen George Soros. This video segment, featuring ominous music, refers to Soros as a “multimillionaire Jew” and a “Jew of flexible morals”.

This segment includes outlandish and unfounded claims that Soros has used capitalism and Wall Street to finance “anti-system” campaigns around the world; that he was an architect of the 2008 financial collapse; and that he had played a role in legitimizing narcoterrorists in Colombia.

This blatantly anti-Semitic, vitriolic, propagandistic rhetoric has no place in American society, much less from a U.S. government funded entity. As a network of the United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM), OCB’s mission is to provide the people of Cuba with “objective news and information programming”.

I was pleased to see you issue a statement and reaffirm that “USAGM networks’ content is required to adhere to the highest standards of professional journalism”. It is an understatement to say that this particular segment, which includes no credible sourcing or standards of ethical journalism and occasionally cites only a fringe website, does not meet that standard. I applaud your initial steps to place those responsible for this production on administrative leave, and immediately begin an investigation, as well as conduct an audit on patterns of unethical and unprofessional reporting.

I expect this investigation to include the following questions and that all information be reported to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in a timely manner, including:

- Who proposed and produced this segment?
- Who is responsible for the reporting?
- What was the editorial process for reviewing this segment, including who reviewed the content, when, and who ultimately approved its release?

- What steps are you taking to ensure that all reporters and producers at the USAGM and its networks and broadcasters strictly adhere to professional standards of journalism?
- Have there been any other segments that have disseminated anti-Semitic or other inappropriate propaganda that does not comport with the USAGM's objectives?
- Why did it take five months for this issue to come to the attention of USAGM leadership?

The networks and grantees of the USAGM play a critical role in promoting freedom and democracy and bringing free, unbiased press to closed societies which otherwise have none. I sincerely hope the USAGM will continue advancing this important mission, and makes certain that there are structures in place to ensure that all reporters and editors adhere to the highest standards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Menendez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Robert Menendez  
Ranking Member

CC:  
Tomas Regalado  
Director  
Office of Cuba Broadcasting