Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 24, 2020

Michael Pack
Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Agency for Global Media
330 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20237

Dear Mr. Pack:

We write regarding media reports that you fired the CEO, President, and the Board of Directors of the Open Technology Fund (OTF), an important cybersecurity research grant-giving non-profit under the control of the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM).

Recent press reports indicate that you ousted the OTF's CEO and fired the President and Board of Directors as one of your first actions on the job. The new board you have installed has no one with any cybersecurity expertise, and instead is made up of partisan appointees with a concerning record on relevant human rights issues. Additionally, according to the resignation letter of the OTF CEO published by the press, you are seeking to change the fundamental mission of OTF and to redirect millions of dollars in OTF funding to technologies that were previously denied funding.

The OTF funds important cybersecurity research to protect journalists, their sources, and the two billion people who regularly use OTF-supported technologies to circumvent online censorship, document human rights abuses, and increase their digital security. OTF-funded technologies and projects have also delivered enormous benefits to U.S. national security and to Americans in their everyday lives. Examples include:

- development of end-to-end encryption now used by more than 2 billion users of WhatsApp, Signal, and Skype;

- funding Let's Encrypt, a free encryption service now used extensively by the U.S. military;

- funding technology used by whistleblowers in the U.S. and around the world; and

- research into "SS7" flaws in wireless carriers' network that have reportedly been exploited by foreign hackers to spy on people in the U.S.

Reports regarding changes to OTF's programming requirements are alarming. The OTF has long followed a policy of only funding projects that are released as open source, have been approved

by OTF's independent technical advisory board, and have been subjected to an independent cybersecurity audit. This is vital, both to prevent taxpayer dollars from being wasted and to prevent design flaws in technology that might put users in authoritarian countries at risk from deadly retaliation. We are concerned by statements from OTF's former CEO that USAGM is now seeking to steer its funds to programs that do not meet these necessary qualifications.

To help us understand your actions, please answer the following questions by July 15, 2020:

1. OTF is one of the most effective funders of cybersecurity research. In order to achieve its Congressionally-tasked mission, OTF's board of directors must include people with cybersecurity experience. Will you commit to appointing at least two board members with a demonstrated background in cybersecurity?

2. Will you commit to hiring a CEO who has a demonstrated background in cybersecurity?

3. Will you commit to keeping in place OTF's technical advisory board?

4. Will you commit to keeping in place existing OTF and USAGM policies that require technology projects to undergo an independent cybersecurity audit to receive funding?

5. Will you commit to OTF continuing to fund free cybersecurity audits for open source technology projects?

We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress