

Please stand by for real-time captions.

Good afternoon and welcome to the SPLC webinar Academy. The Voice of America and how does it function as a federal agency. [Indiscernible] and with me is Ashley Dahlen who will speak on tech support. And we have a presenter Stephen Springer who has been a professional journalist and media executive for 46 years.

Before joining the away Springer worked for CNN for 23 years. During his tenure he along with the other many staff at CNN was a recipient of the Peabody award for CNN coverage of Hurricane Katrina. Springer was cited by the national Academy of television arts and sciences for CNN's coverage of 9/11. Most notably, he served as network producer for the U.S. networks coverage of the 2004 public conflict Republican commission in New York which entailed month-long coordination between the network, the committee and Republican convention committee. Culminated producing convention coverage provided to the networks.

Stephen came to VOA in September 2008 as managing editor of the new center. He was named editor for new standards and best practices in September of 2010 and is currently on assignment at a special assistant to the chief operating officer of the U.S. agency for global media. Springer holds a bachelor of arts in speech and theater in communication from the Harvard human College in New York. Before we get started I will walk you through a few housekeeping reminders. If you have questions you would like to ask the presenter or if you have technical issues please feel free to use the chat box which four people on desktop computers or laptops, is located in the bottom right-hand corner of your screen. I will keep track of questions that come in and at the end, Steve will respond to each of them. We are recording today's session and will email a link to the recording and slice to everyone who registered for this webinar. We will send you a certificate of participation an email that you used will be used. If anybody needs additional certificates because multiple people are watching with you, please email STLP outreach at [Indiscernible] and include the title of today's webinar along with the names an email addresses of those needing certificates. Desktop computers or laptop may zoom in on the slides being present to. Click on the full-screen button in the bottom left side of your screen. Mouse over the blue bar to exit so it expands. Then click on the blue return button to the default view. Finally, we will send out a webinar satisfaction and we will let you know when that survey is available. The URL will appear in the chat box. We would very much appreciate your feedback after the session including comments on the presentation style and the value of the webinar. With that, I will hand the microphone to Steve who will take it from here.

Thank you. Good afternoon or good morning to anybody who is east or west of the east coast, excuse me. I'm happy to do this and thrilled to see the number of attendees for this session. As Jamie noted, I have done with VOA for the last 12 years. And for most of that time I've been handling best practices. I am going to go through a basic overview of what VOA is about. And Jamie had sent me the spreadsheet that had a lot of your comments and questions and I think many of those will be answered during the presentation. As Jamie said, if you have other

questions, please let her know and with the time left I will be happy to answer as many as possible. I will get started.

VOA is a major international broadcaster, even though it is not one that is especially well known in the states. We provide news and information for 85 countries around the world in more than 40 languages. I believe we are currently at 47 through TV, radio, web and mobile. In fiscal 19 her weekly audience was nearly 281 million people around the world. With an annual budget of just about \$250 million. The entire VOA workforce is a little over 1000. With the vast majority of that stuff headquartered in DC with about three blocks away from the U.S. capital.

Now, within the last year and a half, we were renamed the USA global media [Indiscernible] and the parent agency was renamed U.S. agency for global media. We are one of five networks that operate under that. Is you see on the left, the federal network is Voice of America and the office of super broadcasting. Based in Miami and they are known by their radio and TV components, radio TV and TV Marti. They have been in existence since the early 1980s. To the right, you see the surrogate networks in [Indiscernible] radio free Europe, radio free Asia and Middle East broadcasting and open technology fund which is one of the latest of USA the M's initiatives. The difference between radio free Europe and radio free Asia and Middle East broadcasting versus BOA and OCD is that we are as we said federal entities. [Indiscernible]. The other three are grantees who receive their funding from the federal government but do their business as essentially private companies. They are overseen and washed by Congress as are we. That they operate a little differently than we do. Why were we created?

We celebrated our 78th anniversary. In February of this year. We were created to response to the need to close aside his war-torn countries and being overrun by Germany during the war. And as I said wait on one De'Aaron February 1 of 1942.

The whole idea of VOA even going back to 1942 and consistently up until now, our major purpose was the idea of a free press. Through World War II the Cold War, global terrorism and the struggle that continues around the world today, VOA does his best to uphold the principles of a free press. And many countries VOA is the only source of unbiased object and complete information about any ongoing new story. And yes, we do have interference by foreign governments but we continue to broadcast. We have been blocked in Iran, we've been blocked in China. But through our engineering efforts and are folks who work on the technical side, we do what we can to get around those blocks and continue to broadcast into those countries. And all of this you see reported on a regular basis, especially around the world and is continuing to decline. The importance of VOA grows more and more every year.

Now even though VOA was created in 1942, it is undergone a few different permutations over the decades. In fact, I have on my desk at work, a best practices guide from the 1950s. Where it specifically says that we are to VOA was to combat communist disinformation. And it is very up front about what it is supposed to be. In 1976, Congress passed and President Ford signed into law, our charter. Which was the first time we actually had a version of a mission statement that you could say for VOA. Every thing you see in quartz quotes is in our charger. We would be

consistently reliable and authoritative. We would be active, accurate, comprehensive and objective get the we would represent American that meets all of America through a balanced incontinence of significant American institutions we do not represent a report only one part of America or one facet of our society. And finally, that we will present the policies of this country and responsible discussion and discussion of those policies. The point being that VOA is not designed and does not function to present only one side of the story. And and my role as standardbearer, that is something that I am keenly aware of every day. We present all sides of the story to our global audience so they can get all the information they need to make up their own minds about a particular news story.

One of the things that allows this to do that is something called firewall. It was basically without being mentioned directly, part of the charter of 1976. And then reinforced in later legislation through the international broadcasting act of 1994 and the national Defense authorization act of 2016 what the poor law does is prohibit interference by U.S. government officials including the officials of our parent agency in our news coverage. In other words, no one from any other government organization and no other government official can tell VOA what to cover, how to cover it, who to interview, how to program our programs, who we can put on the air. We operate independently as a news organization in that respect. So we have to develop the highest journalistic standards that is free of political interference. In fact, the legislation from 1994 says that we are to maintain the highest standards of broadcast journalism. That continues even today. Just as a side note, this idea of a firewall is not unique to VOA as a government agency. The firewall exists in the private sector in commercial media. As Jamie mentioned I work for CNN for 23 years. And in my last two years I worked in their standards department. There is a firewall within those news organizations as well. And to give you a very brief example, when I was in standards at CNN, Ford motors was one of our biggest sponsors. It was the thing for you if you wash Larry King live and go to the commercial, the whole screen would pull up with the Ford logo and Larry King live on to you by Ford Motor's. During that two-year period that I was at standards, the investigated unit was producing a series of stories about Ford trucks and SUVs and engines exploding for no reason. The whole idea of the firewall and the commercial side is that the business side of the news organization cannot tell the newsgathering side of that organization what to cover and how to cover it. Even though our investigative unit was doing a series that was critical of Ford Motors, no one from the business side ever contacted us and said you can't do that. It will hurt our relationship with Ford. Because the business side knew they couldn't reach in and interfere with our work. The same thing goes here on the federal side. No one can reach in and dictate to us how our work should be done.

We have various journalism initiatives I'm actually involved in a couple of these. This collaboration with Arizona State University's conch contrite journalism which is named after Walter Cronkite. We work to contribute to transparency and all reporting. And we are working with software to make it easier and quicker for journalistic post corrections to new stories. That is a huge deal for all news organizations. To make sure that if there is an error, we get it out there and the correction out there as quickly as possible. And that we state exactly what we have corrected. In the second bullet, I work with news standards editors from the major

networks and the major news papers, tackling the toughest challenges we race and facing the organization today. COVID has kind of crept into us a little bit in that we used to meet about once a quarter but we haven't met since I think the last end of last year because of this. But I meet with my counterparts at ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox, Reuters, AP, the Wall Street Journal, the pointer organization which is sports journalism and we basically sit around and discuss some of the challenges we are facing. In fact we face a lot of the same challenges and this particular age of 24 hour find it everywhere news. We also remember of the one Free Press coalition where we work with other editors and publishers around the world to spotlight journalists who were under attack.

This slide probably has the most relation to the work that many of you do. DeSmith month act was passed by Congress in 1948 and prevents us from broadcasting into the United States. The background to this was that during the Cold War, it was felt that VOA should not be a tool, should not be used to propagandize U.S. audiences the way let's say that Tass was used to propagandize the Soviet bloc . So we have been barred since 1948 from broadcasting into the U.S.. If you try to find us on the radio, AM, FM, satellite, streaming, you will not find us. You won't find us on broadcast TV, satellite TV, cable, streaming, OTC, in that the newest innovations. We do not broadcast into the United States. However, once the web started becoming the global carrier that it is now of news and information, we start to realize within the agency that anybody in the United States can see our websites. All 47 of them. All they have to do and if you want to look at the English website just type in VOA news.com and there we are. So the parent agency at that time was the broadcasting Board of Governors in 2012-2013, went to Congress and said look, in essence, our work is being seen in the U.S. Our primary audience is still overseas but we are not going to geoblock ourselves from being seen in the United States. This material is out there, everyone can access the web. So with that argument, Smith month was amended to share only our unwritten contract content inside the U.S. upon request. So another words, if I go to a journalistic conference here in the states, and I usually go once a year, I cannot go up to anybody and say hey, I would love to be able to get your station, your network to carry VOA on a regular basis. User stories to read the programming and whatever it may be, I cannot do that. But if someone sees my name tag, and says oh, Steve, I see you are with the a weekend we would be interested in getting your contact. Then I can have that conversation with them. And we can set up something or someone wants to be a domestic affiliate of some kind, we can do that. But, as it says here in the second bullet point if that entity originates and broadcast into the United States deliberately, that is a problem. But we can take one time request. In fact, today, this morning, we got a request from ABC news for some video that one of our reporter shot in Lafayette Square in DC yesterday. And that you meld us and said we would love to be able to use it can we have your permission to use it. We said yes it is our own content and you can use it to make sure you credit us. So that is the big difference. We can take single requests and we can do it for a news organization or educational institutions, what we want to do is anything that has to do with marketing and advertising. As I am sure you probably all realize, the federal agency, we cannot promote any one organization or any one company or product over another. So our content absolutely cannot be used for promotion or marketing. If someone comes to us and says, we would like to use this for a class

or we want to use this particular news story in our newscast with ABC news, we can do that. But it has to be on a case-by-case basis. We won't grant someone blanket use.

And it goes without saying that we have journalists in hot spots all around the world. We have had a reporter down in Venezuela in everything's been happening for the last few years. We had reporters down at the border in Texas and California. When the immigrants were coming across the border last year in 2018. We have a reporter who is based in Turkey and she covers the Middle East and northern Africa and has the refugee stories. So we have people placed all around the world. Who are in these hot spots and we have lost people in pursuit of their work. In fact, in our main hallway, there is an exhibit on our wall of the journalist who have lost their lives while covering news stories for VOA and for our sister organizations.

Just a brief look at some of the people who have contributed to VOA over the years. It's on the top left-hand corner. Willis Conover maybe the most well-known VOA personality and its entire history. He had a show called I believe jazz time. And this resonated with Eastern European audiences . He was the most well-known person during the 50s and 60s. And we still get requests to this day for his broadcast. People want to use to talk about the history of jazz. The next to him is Leo cirque ECN. Leo is essentially the Willis Conover of African music. His show music time in Africa was in Africa what Willis Conover was to Eastern Europe. And he is known as a treasure. Throughout the African continent. We now have a woman by the name of Peder Maxwell who continues music time in Africa and she makes trips there is and is incredibly well known there as well. And many of you may know this next, Edward R Murrow. Legendary CBS news broadcaster, reporting from the rooftops of London. During the knots he blitzed during World War II. Reporter for CBS news back in the states whose program see it now, most well-known for exposing Joseph R McCarthy. During the Cold War witchhunts. Murrow was the first head of the United States internation agency which is essentially our answer ancestor. U.S. IAM President Kennedy named Edgar Armer to be the first head of USIA. Finally in the lower left column, Philomena Jerry who recently passed away. She was one of the first female White House correspondence who covered Nixon, Carter, and Reagan. Now looking at today's broadcasters. In the Apple left, Steve Herman who is the White House Euro chief. In the 12 years I get done with VOA, he has been based in as you can see, Japan, India, South Korea and Thailand. He traveled the word world with President Trump. And is probably for VOA, houseless A, the number one Twitter user in VOA. He is so adept at Twitter, he uses it as his reporting outlet. So if there's a breaking news story, he will continue to post updates as the story is happening. And then he will take all of that information plus everything else he has gathered and then write his new stories or produces video stories. He is an exceptional journalist. He's quick, smart, one of the best journalist I've ever worked with. Next to him is [Indiscernible]. Is the chief of Ukraine service. Well renowned in Ukraine. In fact, I can't remember now if it was 2017 or 2018, she was asked to moderate the presidential debate for the Ukrainian presidential campaign. So with a huge honor for us to have her go there and moderate that debate.

Below Mary Slava is [Indiscernible]. She is an expert on central Asia. Currently, the only U.S. journalist to receive any accreditation from her home country, use Pakistan to work as a foreign media correspondent inside the country. She is based here in DC but because of this status, she

is able to be the only Western journalist that can go back into use Pakistan and report from there from time to time. Roger Mudd two, one of our top favorites and our friends to Africa service. And he has his radio program the RM showed in his TV program and French. Music, conversation, he is one of the most outgoing most engaging people you would ever want to meet. He has an incredible personality. And that probably goes far, far away to explain his popularity with audiences, not just in Africa but anywhere that is speaking French.

Talking about the actual broadcasting. We are headquartered in DC. Although there's not many Avenza building right now, as I'm sure you can imagine. But we have report is based at the White House, two full-time and 2 at the State Department, one at the Pentagon and one in Congress. And we have bureaus around the world. 14 television and one in audio and 40-year-old readies radio studios in the United States. The vast majority of those TV and radio studios are in DC. New York has television studios and radio studios as well. We have a slightly smaller operation in Los Angeles. But all of our correspondence have the capability weather here in the states or overseas, to follow from the field, we have invested in the latest technology to be able to get video reports back from areas that not normally would feed video from. And so in that regard we are highly competitive for our colleagues in the commercial networks. And to give you an idea of what we cover. Other than what we call the news of the day. America's story, we actually have one person who was responsible for telling unique little stories about the United States. About our people. About the different cultures in the U.S. About the government and what happens how it affects people across the United States. When the refugee crisis started earlier this century, we invested in expanding our coverage of the refugee crisis. As I mentioned, our correspondent based in Istanbul has done a remarkable job covering refugees. And again when we were down at the southern border of the United States, are teams down there did an incredible work. Two years ago we created within ourselves antral agency division something called the extreme an extremism watching desk is that they will report on terrorist activities around the world.

The press freedom initiative was started last year. And their mission is to report on areas and stories where press freedom has been weakened, I should say the press report has been weakened where restrictions have been strengthened against press freedom. As you can see, China, Iran, North Korea and Russia. We focused on it across the world. About four years ago, we turned our San Francisco Bureau into the Silicon Valley Bureau to focus more on science and technology. So right now what they been working on a lot has been related to COVID-19 in terms of how a lot of tech firms have turned around to start producing PPE and things of that nature. So they are there on a regular basis. Women's issues has become a major coverage issue for us. I actually did a survey a few years ago, I had to look at a weeks worth of reporting on the websites from all of our language services, just to see how many stories featured women, how many programs of our radio TV featured women. And that created the women's issues initiative and that is ongoing.

Most recently, a website called polygraph.info. Is our own in-house fact checking website. That focused at first on disinformation and misinformation coming out of Russia. That is slowly being

expanded into looking at other countries where that kind of information is coming out on a more regular basis and we are trying to fact check all of that.

Are colleague radio free Europe and radio free liberty which is based in Prague, we have two initiatives is kept one is a VOA 365 and that's as it says, it is a cross-platform effort by BOA and RPL. It is a relaunch of programming efforts to confront the Iranian regime disinformation efforts. With Persian language programs that go inside Iran and the global Diaspora. This is something VOA 365 started last year. And if the model for it is what is known as current time TV. This was the first major venture with our FDL. 24/7 Russian language he be and by both of our groups. To provide a more comfortable him more comprehensive, objective more trustworthy alternative to Kremlin -controlled media like RT and Sputnik. Goes into 26 countries throughout Europe and Eurasia.

I mention some of our bureaus and as you can see in this chart. We have her own correspondence plus freelancers. And you can see that we are heavily populated in Africa. Through South and Central Asia. Through central and northern Latin America and a little bit we would like to increase our penetration into Latin America certainly. But you can see that most of our focus is outside the U.S. That being said, we have a network of more than 3000 affiliate stations around the world. That is pretty sizable when you get down to it. You can see at least in terms of where our affiliates are, we are densely covered in Latin America, Africa, northern part of Africa and we would like to get more presents, and then you can see where we are again going through Eurasia and into East Asia.

Our weekly audiences have increased steadily over the last five years. That has to do with funding that we received from the government. And through our management making a concerted effort to spend more money on FM radio. On HDTV, and on our digital presence just of the digital presence has skyrocketed with almost all of our language services, it's an incredible increase.

This to me tells you probably for more about VOA than anything I said until now and will say after the slide. 100 surveys taken each of these countries between 2013-2018, and Afghanistan are trustworthiness is 79%. 89% in China. 99% and Ethiopia, 85% in Iran. 73 in Pakistan, 87 in Somalia. 65 in Ukraine and 79 in Turkey. Even in Russia, just under 50% is actually pretty darned good. And the fact of the matter is, we wouldn't have these numbers in these countries were it not for the fact that our audiences trust us to tell the truth in full. Good news, bad news. In total.

Social media growth. Again this is YouTube and the efforts of our management and to get us more well-positioned in social media. As you can see, YouTube is just through the roof, every language service. Has a YouTube channel. They have Facebook accounts, they have twitter accounts. And we continue to push our content out on those platforms on a regular basis. On a daily basis. We are we have won many honors and not allowed to compete for the Emmy awards and United dates unfortunately. Though as much as we would like to. But we win these awards on a regular basis. The Gabriel award what has to do with reporting on faith issues, our

correspondent based in Chicago pain for about just one a couple of Gabriel awards for reporting that he did last year. We are pretty proud of that. I was going to say this at the start. When I was talking about the creation of VOA. These were the first words said by William Harlan Hale, February 1942. The news may be good, the news may be bad. We shall tell you the truth. In in some respects for me that is more of a mission statement than our charter. It is as simple as it can be. Three sentences. It is good or bad, we will tell you about it and as a lifelong journalist, that is something I believe in the early. Going back to Mr. Morrow. A copy of that picture hangs in my office. It can be persuasive and must be believable, to be believable we must be credible and to be credible we must be truthful. Can't think of any other way to put it. One leads to the other. And if we are all of those things, then our audiences will believe us. They will trust us and they have continued to do that for 78 years. With that, I am happy to take whatever questions you have. So let's get them started.

Thanks, Stephen. If you have a question, please put it in the chat box below. We have a couple already. The first question is it mentioned that VOA gets request for [Indiscernible] jazz broadcast. This makes me wonder how much of VOA historical content has been archived. Is stepping digitized? Project yes, absolutely. The media asset management branch has been working on this on a regular basis. For at least as long as I have been involved in dealing with our contracts with our news providers. I forget which university it is, if you want me to, I can find out. Who has the Conover files and I believe the vast majority of the news content is now being digitized and will have a home in the University. If you would like me to do that, I would be more than happy to check into that. Speech of another question, what factors come into play when VOA determines which specific spots they want to [Indiscernible] Expanded to globally?

Usually that depends on factors which include whether or not there is a sense of a free press or not a free press in the country at a particular time. For instance, when I joined VOA in 2008 and we still had a Greek service. And I would say about five years ago it was finally determined that Greece was no longer considered to be a country where they restricted press. What we have to do is when we want to add or subtract a language, we actually have to go to Congress to seek approval. And finally, as I said with the Greek service, Congress realized that it was no longer necessary. So sometimes it may take a while to get a particular service started. We have had in our [Indiscernible] Africa division we have had a lot of sub languages started in the African and French to Africa due to the fact that in the country of Mali there were other people about seven years ago. And there are some native dialects that were necessary to reach other than broadcasting and French. So we were given extra funding to stand up those particular languages. I think it was three of them in addition to French in that ServiceNow. So it comes and goes. It really depends on what the landscape is in a particular time, whether or not we feel it is possible that the language can be stood up on a regular basis. And whether Congress is willing to give us the funding to do that.

Trump has threatened the funding of the VOA. Can he do that or sent to Congress?

Well, he hasn't threatened the funding per se. As you might imagine, the sensitive issue for us right now. And you know there are members of Congress who are concerned about recent developments within our parent agency. And of course that includes VOA. I think to keep in mind that USA GM and USA global media and VOA are headquartered in the same building in the Southwest DC. So at this point in time, I can tell you that nothing has changed in terms of our reporting and how we do our work. No funding has been taken away from us, so we are functioning as normal right now.

Are VOA employees federal?

Yes. Well, the vast majority of federal, we are full-time employees and yes, we are federal, IMF Ed. I am a fed. We have a number of contractors and they are under personal service contracts. That they work alongside full-time federal employees. And have the same responsibilities and same -- and follow the same guidelines as an employee.

How do we find out more about foreign-language programming on VOA, for instance you would have to know about the RM shows to find it?

If you go to VOA news.com on the upper right of the website, you will see a depiction of the globe and next to with the letters L.A. in G4 language. Click on that and you will get a drop-down menu which will show you every language that is available on the web and if you click on French to Africa, which I think is VOA F3.com. That is where you will find the information for Rogers programs.

No representation in Saudi Arabia?

No, no representation in Saudi. If warranted, we used to have a bureau in Cairo and every so often the Cairo bureau would go into Saudi but not on a regular basis. That bureau went into Libya also. Every so often but what happened for our Middle East reporting sectors, Cairo became difficult for us to work in. In terms of travel in and to get to other parts of northern Africa and into the middle east, it was decided that Istanbul was a good place to be. So that's where our correspondent for that entire area is now based in Istanbul.

Any more questions for Steve about VOA or anything he talked about? Ashley has pushed out the subsection survey. You see the link in the chat box and if you wouldn't mind taking that survey for us. That helps us with progress programming at GPO.

I don't see any more questions. Steve, I want to thank you so much for presenting on VOA. I want to thank everyone for tuning in to today's webinar. Now I see a couple of more.

Oh, I see. It's part of each persons registration.

I'm afraid if I tried to get out of my screen, oh wait, hold on. Let me open up the registration. Let me see which ones those might be. I'm assuming you are still, still here? I'm waiting for

Excel to open up.'s budget will the recording be made available by email and the answer is yes. Tomorrow Ashley will be sending out an email with the link to the recording as well as copies of the slide deck and a link to the satisfaction survey.

Someone asked, how does the national VOA relate to state organizations. We really don't. We have no interplay with state organizations. At least none that I am aware of. Good our patrons use it? Anyone is welcome to go to VOA news.com. What is referenced by about [Indiscernible]. If you want to see how the news is reported without any particular taking of sides and if you want to see reporting that you may not see anywhere else about certain issues around the world, I think that would be the value that you would get from going to VOA news.com. Someone asked is there a part of influence? Midgette no, there is not. Even going back to the previous question. We are committed to reporting the news in its entirety. The good, the bad, in between, all sides of the story. The guidance I have always given our staff in journalistic staff is that we need to tell the audience everything they need to know to make up their mind about a story. The other thing I tell everyone is that when they walk into the building, they have to leave their personal beliefs, their religious beliefs, their political beliefs, that gets left at the door. I don't care what my colleagues political beliefs are, what their religious beliefs are. We are a news organization and we have to report the news as fairly as possible to all sides. We don't favor one side or another. We don't do advocacy journalism. In fact, I find that phrase to be a misnomer. Because if you are advocating for something it is not journalism. Report is based in the country? Yes for the most part. As I explained. We talked about this.who has oversight of VOA. The U.S. agency for global media and I went through that. This question is so long it's off the page. What selected for retention? Anything that is selected for retention, we do work with the national archives on what of our content is there. One of the problems we have had, I wouldn't call it a problem, is that there is, we have discovered, VOA material and USIA again our ancestors material, that lives in various places that are not necessarily in the archives. And we are trying to track all of that down so that we can pretty much come to one repository but we do talk on a regular basis and that is through the head of our media asset management branch.

Here's a few about are we propaganda and so on and so on. Someone as has it function as a propaganda and public relations entity. I wish I was doing this in the office so I could grab that 1950s God that I was talking about and read to use some of what is in their. Because I spent the day reading it and I kept pushing back on the desk when I was reading the stuff because it was clearly, clearly meant to be combating Russian propaganda or Soviet propaganda but pushing out propaganda in its place that was coming from Washington. So that was a very shaky period, the Cold War, in terms of what VOA was and was not doing. One of these days I would like to get back in the office and read that again., What role does the broadcasting Board of Governors have an editorial policy. I address that but again, non-. They do not interfere with what we do. Who works for VOA and how does one apply to work for VOA? USA jobs.gov. That is the place to go. I don't know of our job listings if they have changed to reflect U.S. agency for global media. If you put in at least I know if used to build to put in the BG for broadcasting Board. That would get you all of the jobs that come to the broadcasting Board of Governors. Back and since I haven't been on USA jobs.gov and a while, I don't know if that has been changed to U.S. AGM.

Where is VOA [Indiscernible]. We no longer have a Greek service, we closed up Jerusalem and Cairo. Since I've been here. We used to have a bureau in Hong Kong and that was before I joined the agency and that has been closed for a while. Our Asia hub is in Bangkok. Plan to add new languages? As I said, that depends on what the outlook is in a particular country and whether or not it is deemed to be important enough to go into that country and whether or not we could get funding. The same person is her plan to keep European headquarters in Prague. Prague is the headquarters for radio free Europe, radio free Europe. We do not have a base in Prague. We are are are bases in DC, Prague is the home for RF E RL. How are things going in the shutdown. I have to give huge props to VOA senior management who did an incredible amount of work to ensure that people could do their work from home. To the point of producing TV programs from home. Money was spent to produce sometimes you may see people out somewhere like in a sports broadcast and they have like I can't remember what they call it but it's like a screen that you put behind somebody that has their logo. We have VOA screens made to send to people's homes so they could have that logo. We have done all sorts of things to make sure people have been doing their live reporting. Our Georgian language service has two women who are constantly doing live reports outdoors, where they live, in their apartment complex but it is beautiful and they're doing their work from their. So we have made all sorts of adjustments and it seems that the audiences have really appreciated it. Think they feel that there is a freshness to seeing something other than the same old studio every day. Having said that, one of our Mandarin language shows and a Persian show, and I think the Russian current time show, do need to be in the building so there are a few I think three shows in total that are produced within the building since March. Or since late February. But otherwise, everything is produced remotely. That gets to all the questions that I didn't answer already.

There is one additional question. What would you .2 as the catalyst for the transition away from being propaganda?

Great question. I think Mr. Murrell being named the head of USIA in 1961. Was a huge part of that and was probably the start of it given his global reputation for being a journalist of unparalleled skill. And I think our charter in 1976, once president Ford signed that and made it very clear that we were to be objective and fair and comprehensive and are reporting has pretty much carried the day for the last 44 years since that was signed. So you know it is something developed over time and once we got out of the Cold War, and it's interesting, that that legislation but president Ford was a job I signed in July 1970 pick six, I think like eight days after the bicentennial celebrations and it came two years after Watergate. So I know this from reading our history, VOA took a lot of heat during Watergate. Because we were supposed to be some people thought VOA should be defending the administration and not reporting the news. Not reporting the leaks and not reporting what had happened with the 72 presidential campaign and other elements of that and so I think part of that, that was reflected in the charter. That we should function like any good responsible news organization. And I will be honest, when I applied to work with VOA in 2008, I made sure, read through that website before even had my first interview to make sure that I would be comfortable coming to VOA even knowing it was a government agency. I needed to know that the journalism was fair and accurate. Before even set foot in the building. So that is the best way I can answer that.

Another question, it would be interesting to share how VOA was actually able to rip wart on WikiLeaks despite being a federal agency.

[Laughter] wow, how much time do we have? [Laughter] I was the managing editor of our newsroom when the original WikiLeaks dump came out. 10 years ago, my God, August 2020 10, 10 years the summer. We had a huge dilemma. I will try to do this in five minutes unless I get an option to go into overtime. We read in the newsroom what was happening. We saw that there was something going on at the time reporting and whoever else was reporting it. We received in email, the whole agency received an email from someone in our I.T. department. This is a paraphrase and a summary and not the exact email but the basics were, you are all working government computers. You are not allowed to access any classified information on computer that is not cleared to read classified information. I can find the actual email but that is the basis, we were told by I.T., you can't do this. If you want to talk about the human equivalent of a nuclear explosion, that's what happened in our newsroom when that email hit our inboxes. Everyone just was dumbfounded. Who is this guy in I.T. to tell us that we as journalists can't cover a new story. Now, keeping in mind that yes, I.T. was right. We shouldn't be looking at classified material on computers that are not cleared to look at classified material. But we journalist are as skeptical, we are skeptical questioning a lot. None of us would take that sitting down. What we found out after it all happened, was that the guy in I.T. sent out that email without advising the gentleman who was the director of VOA at that time, or his number two, the executive editor of VOA at the time. So they were taken by surprise. So we were all sort of running around with their heads cut off as to how to deal with this. Eventually what happened was, the gentleman who was the chairman of the board of governors at that time name Walter Isaacson, who was now a best-selling biographical author, he was chairman of the board at that time and was president of CNN at one time and he sent a note to I.T. and to the General Counsel's office who had been talking to the White House General Counsel's office and the Justice Department, but he basically told them you were going to find a way to let our journalist look at those documents that we will not rely on secondhand reporting, that we get from the post or the BBC or any other news organization. Our journalist need to see this material. So that we can service our global audience. Here's what happened. After that memo went out, our I.T. department gave the newsroom for laptops that were completely clean. No history, no bookmarks, no tabs, no nothing. They were given to two senior reporters and 2 senior editors. We were given for Wi-Fi cards so that those for laptops could connect to Wi-Fi networks outside of the buildings nucleus. So we wouldn't be on quote/unquote the government network or government computers. Those two reporters went in and started to look for stories or for information and WikiLeaks that were of interest to VOA in general and to specific language services. They wrote their stories. They sent it from those laptops, to the two senior editors who read them on their laptops. They did their editing, got to the final one and the stories were published. And then everybody in the building turned and that's how we handled the. At the end of the day, those for laptops and Wi-Fi cards were handed back to I.T. who then overnight, wiped everything clean all over again , completely removed everything from the laptops and then gave them back to us the next morning. We did that for at least the first couple of weeks. Until we were satisfied that we had covered stories that were of the most

interest to our global audience. It was a problem. It was a huge problem. The funny thing is, 10 years later, when we started doing training on the far world which I mentioned, fire wall and we saw that at the time as being a firewall violation because someone who was not involved in newsgathering, someone outside of the news process of VOA was telling us what we could or could not do. At that time in 2010 we weren't even talking about our walls. It was only one we were putting that together that we realized that that would classify as a firewall violation. It was a very strange couple of days to have to go through, especially being the managing editor of the newsroom and trying to keep the staff calm plus get the news out. Now, a gentleman who was the national security correspondent at the time who is one of the few senior reporters who got the laptops, email back to the guys in I.T. and said so tell me this, what if I go on WikiLeaks from home and I write my story from home and then I send it to my editor. Or in the other scenario, what if I print out at home all the information I want to write my story, I bring that paperwork into the building and I type it on my clean laptop. Send it to my editor and then shred all my notes. What about that? And the guy in I.T. understood where that was coming from and he answered back, welcome you would still be violating the law but there would be nothing I could do about it because you're not doing it in the building. So it was -- that's to give you an example of what the environment was like at that time. I hope that answers the question.

That is a fascinating story, thank you for sharing it with us. We are out of time. I want to thank you Stephen, this has been really a great presentation and fascinating. And good question and answer session it was really great. I want to thank everyone who is tuned in today. Thank you all and we will see you at the next Academy webinar. Thanks.

Thank you and I had a great time, thank you everybody.

[Event Concluded]