

JIM BANKS
THIRD DISTRICT, INDIANA



COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE
STRATEGIC COMPETITION
BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE
CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1403

June 11, 2024

Chairman Tom Cole
Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Mario Diaz-Balart
Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Room HT-2, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Subcommittee Chairman Diaz-Balart,

I write to you regarding the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) past partnerships with the Data Journalism Agency (TEXTY), a Ukrainian non-governmental organization (NGO).

TEXTY was founded by Anatoly Bondarenko in 2010. Mr. Bondarenko worked as a trainer in a U.S. State Department program called TechCamp in 2015. More recently, USAID selected TEXTY as one of the six "implementing partners" on its Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration and Services program.

Mr. Bondarenko's NGO recently published a report titled "Roller Coaster: From Trumpists to Communists. The forces in the U.S. impeding aid to Ukraine and how they do it."

According to the report, the individuals on the list "oppose supporting Ukraine," and many "echo key messages of Russian propaganda aimed at depriving Ukrainians of the ability to defend themselves." Seventy-six organizations and 388 individuals appear on the list, including President Donald Trump and 116 members of the House of Representatives, all Republicans. One of them, Congressman Jerry Carl (R-AL), serves on the Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs (SFOPS).

Another Ukrainian NGO, Myrotvorets, maintained a database of alleged enemies of Ukraine. Myrotvorets published its targets' personally identifiable information, potentially placing those listed in harm's way in a transparent attempt to intimidate. The Ukrainian government, through

its Center for Countering Disinformation, also maintains a list of individuals who also allegedly “promote narratives consistent with Russian propaganda.”

Federal bureaucrats should not support or partner with foreign groups that attempt to intimidate and silence U.S. citizens and lawmakers.

I am urging the Appropriations Committee majority to support efforts in the Fiscal Year 2025 SFOPS bill to force the State Department and USAID to end all relations with foreign NGOs like TEXTY that seek to silence the speech of Americans they dislike and to sway U.S. policymakers to serve their own interests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Banks". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jim Banks
Member of Congress