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9TH DISTRICT, GEORGIA

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LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1009

March 11, 2023

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The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Secretary Blinken:

It has come to our attention that the State Department ("DOS" or "the Department") has provided substantial funding to a dark money British organization committed to defunding and shutting down certain websites for alleged "disinformation."¹ According to the website of this shadow-funded, dark money group known as the Global Disinformation Index ("GDI"), incorporated in the United Kingdom (U.K.) as "Disinformation Index LTD"², its mission is to "remove the financial incentive [to create] disinformation."³ GDI received roughly \$665,000 in Orwellianesque grants from two Department-backed entities, including from the National Endowment for Democracy ("NED"), an organization funded with \$300 Million in government dollars in 2021 alone, and through the State Department's Global Engagement Center.⁴ GDI states that its "core output" is a shrouded "dynamic inclusion list" that encompasses at least 2,000 websites.⁵

GDI's *Disinformation Risk Assessment: The Online News Market in the United States* report⁶ ranked the "risk" of online platforms, including liberal websites like NPR, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post*, as "low," while ranking every single one of the "ten riskiest online news outlets," all of which are right-leaning or conservative publications, as "Risk Level: High." This labeling of news outlets that go against the State Department's worldview as "Risk Level: High" is concerning and appears to be an attempt from the Biden Administration to suppress and deplatform any dissent.

These grants have real world implications, chilling freedom of expression and speech with impunity. For example, considering the Energy Department and FBI's new determination that the Coronavirus most likely arose from a Wuhan lab leak⁷, this taxpayer funded British outfit pressured advertising companies to "punish" websites that dared to report on the entirely legitimate

¹ Gabe Kaminsky, *Disinformation Inc.: State Department bankrolls groups secretly blacklisting conservative media*, WASHINGTON EXAMINER (Feb. 09, 2023), <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/restoring-america/equality-not-elitism/disinformation-group-secretly-blacklisting-right-wing-outlets-bankrolled-state-department>.

² Articles of Incorporation, Disinformation Index LTD (filed April 07, 2018), <https://bit.ly/UK-filing-history>.

³ GLOBAL DISINFORMATION INDEX, <https://www.disinformationindex.org/product/> (last visited Feb. 13, 2023).

⁴ Gabe Kaminsky, *Disinformation Inc: Jim Jordan and Matt Gaetz vow investigation into conservative site blacklists*, WASHINGTON EXAMINER (Feb. 16, 2023), <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/house/disinformation-inc-jim-jordan-and-matt-gaetz-vow-investigation-into-conservative-site-blacklists> ("...two State Department-backed entities, the National Endowment for Democracy and the Global Engagement Center, grant[ed] \$665,000 combined between 2020 and 2021 to the Global Disinformation Index.")

⁵ See GLOBAL DISINFORMATION INDEX, fn. 3, *supra*.

⁶ Global Disinformation Index, *Disinformation Risk Assessment: The Online News Market in the United States* (Dec. 16, 2022), https://www.disinformationindex.org/files/gdi_us-mm-22.pdf.

⁷ Michael R. Gordon, *Lab Leak Most Likely Origin of COVID-19 Pandemic, Energy Department Now Says*, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (Feb. 26, 2023), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-origin-china-lab-leak-807b7b0a>.

lab leak theory.⁸ We now know that this British group went after companies like Google, slamming them for “providing ad revenue streams to “known disinformation sites” peddling coronavirus conspiracies.”⁹ The Department’s reported taxpayer funding of this secret, foreign organization only encompasses the years 2020 through 2021¹⁰, and forthcoming FOIA requests by Americans for Prosperity Foundation (“AFPF”) may reveal that it merely scratches the surface of DOS’ taxpayer-funded social credit system.¹¹ Accordingly, we expect the Department’s full and complete compliance with AFPF’s FOIA¹², and Chair Comer’s production of documents demand¹³, of the Biden Administration’s assault on the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution.¹⁴

Other Media Bias and fact-checker websites, such as left-leaning “AllSides Media Bias”, rank the *New York Times*, as “Left”, while *Real Clear Politics*, which GDI labeled as “Risk Level: High”, is ranked by independent fact checkers as the most center and non-biased publication.¹⁵ NPR itself ironically spread disinformation in the midst of a Presidential election.¹⁶

Due to the significant criticism of these grants, including from prominent Constitutional lawyer Jonathan Turley, NED is reportedly attempting to disassociate itself from GDI.¹⁷ However, this only leads to more unanswered questions. For example, it is unknown whether the Department attached stipulations to the grants or how the taxpayer funds were committed by NED for this government-by-proxy censorship campaign.

Therefore, please respond to the following questions no later than March 30, 2023:

1. Why is the State Department sending taxpayer dollars to a foreign organization that polices and suppresses domestic American information?

⁸ Gabe Kaminsky, *Disinformation Inc: Government-backed group tried to punish sites boosting COVID lab leak theory*, WASHINGTON EXAMINER (Feb. 27, 2023), <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/restoring-america/equality-not-elitism/disinformation-inc-government-backed-group-tried-to-punish-sites-boosting-covid-lab-leak-theory>.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ See Kaminsky, fn. 4, *supra*.

¹¹ Gabe Kaminsky, *Disinformation Inc.: Conservative group launches records inquiry over conservative news blacklists*, WASHINGTON EXAMINER (Feb. 16, 2023), <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/restoring-america/equality-not-elitism/disinformation-inc-conservative-group-launches-records-inquiry-over-conservative-news-blacklists> (“AFPF is demanding ‘documents reflecting any financial support — or details of that support — given to the GDI, Disinformation Index, Inc., AN Foundation, Disinformation Index Foundation, or Park Advisers.’”)

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Gabe Kaminsky, *Disinformation Inc: James Comer demands records on State Department funding group blacklisting conservatives*, WASHINGTON EXAMINER (Feb. 23, 2023), <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/disinformation-inc-james-comer-state-department-funding-blacklisting-conservatives>.

¹⁴ U.S. Const. amends. I, XIV.

¹⁵ *Allsides Media Bias Chart*, ALLSIDES (last accessed Feb. 13, 2023), <https://www.allsides.com/media-bias/media-bias-chart>.

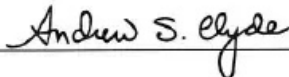
¹⁶ Congressman Andrew Clyde Letter to President and CEO of NPR John Lansing (July 21, 2022), chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://files.constantcontact.com/647991e4801/aa83157e-7129-4a8e-90c0-b6bdf9f24e4e.pdf?rdr=true.

¹⁷ Jonathan Turley, *The National Endowment for Democracy to Cut Off Further Support for the Global Disinformation Index*, JONATHANTURLEY.ORG (Feb. 20, 2023), <https://jonathanturley.org/2023/02/20/the-national-endowment-for-democracy-to-cut-off-further-support-for-the-global-disinformation-index/#:~:text=The%20National%20Endowment%20for%20Democracy%20To%20Cut%20Off,That%20includes%20a%20recent%20column%20in%20The%20Hill>.

2. Do you think it is appropriate for a *de facto* foreign organization or individual to police and perform Risk Assessments on domestic American news outlets with taxpayer dollars? Please explain.
3. How does funding efforts to counter "disinformation" by a foreign agent in the amount of \$665,000, through the two Department-backed entities named herein, advance America's national security and diplomatic interests?
4. Was the State Department or any agents thereof, including DOS-backed entities, involved or consulted, in any capacity whatsoever, with GDI's analysis of "disinformation" including, but without limitation, the November 8, 2022, report entitled "Ad-funded Elections Integrity Disinformation" or the December 16, 2022 report entitled "Disinformation Risk Assessment: The Online News Market in the United States"? Please explain.
5. Were you, your agents, State Department-backed entities, or designees directed by the President, White House, former-Speaker Pelosi, the Democratic National Committee, or any government official to fund GDI with taxpayer dollars? Please explain.

We look forward to your written responses no later than March 30, 2023.

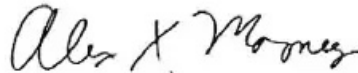
Sincerely,



Andrew S. Clyde
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Alex X. Mooney
Member of Congress



Dan Bishop
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



George Santos
Member of Congress



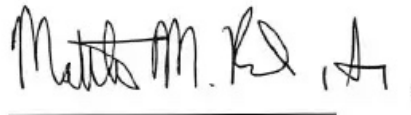
Andy Ogles
Member of Congress



Scott Perry
Member of Congress



Kat Cammack
Member of Congress



Matt Rosendale
Member of Congress



Barry Moore
Member of Congress