

TWELFTH SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION TO
CONGRESS ON UNITED STATES-BASED FOREIGN
MEDIA OUTLETS

FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 13, 2023 TO
APRIL 11, 2024

Submitted Pursuant to
Public Law No. 115-232

The Federal Communications Commission (Commission) hereby submits this Twelfth Semi-Annual Report to Congress on United States-Based Foreign Media Outlets pursuant to the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (NDAA).¹ The NDAA requires certain media outlets to file reports with the Commission and, in turn, for the Commission to provide a report to Congress summarizing those filings. Consistent with the statute, the previous report, covering the period April 13, 2023 to October 12, 2023, was transmitted to Congress prior to November 9, 2023.² This Twelfth report, covering October 13, 2023, to April 11, 2024, is hereby transmitted to Congress within six months of the previous report, or by May 9, 2024.³

Background. In 2018, Congress passed the NDAA, which added a new section 722 to the Communications Act of 1934 (Communications Act) requiring that all “United States-based foreign media outlet[s]” submit to the Commission a report containing: 1) the name of such outlet; and 2) a description of the relationship of such outlet to the foreign principal of such outlet, including a description of the legal structure of such relationship and any funding that such outlet receives from such principal.⁴ The NDAA provides that the term “United States-based foreign media outlet” means an entity that (a) produces or distributes video programming (as defined in section 602 of the Communications Act) that is transmitted, or intended for transmission, by a multichannel video programming distributor (as defined in such section) to consumers in the United States;⁵ and (b) would be an agent of a foreign principal for purposes of the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938 (FARA) but for section 1(d) of FARA.⁶ The Department of Justice has adopted regulations implementing FARA, including definitions of statutory terms.⁷

Section 611(b)(1) of FARA provides that “a government of a foreign country and a foreign political party” are included in the definition of a “foreign principal.”⁸ Section 611(d) of FARA in turn

¹ John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, Pub. L. No. 115-232, §1085(a) (2018) (NDAA).

² *Eleventh Semi-Annual Report to Congress on United States-Based Foreign Media Outlets*, Report, DA-23-1072 (MB Nov. 9, 2023). The first report was transmitted to Congress within 90 days of enactment of the NDAA, or by November 11, 2018. *First Semi-Annual Report to Congress on United States-Based Foreign Media Outlets*, Report, 33 FCC Rcd 11160 (MB 2018).

³ NDAA §1085(b) (codified at 47 U.S.C. § 624(b)).

⁴ 47 U.S.C. § 624(a).

⁵ 47 U.S.C. § 624(d)(2). The Communications Act defines the term “video programming” as “programming provided by, or generally considered comparable to programming provided by, a television broadcast station.” 47 U.S.C. § 522(20). The term “multichannel video programming distributor” means “a person such as, but not limited to, a cable operator, a multichannel multipoint distribution service, a direct broadcast satellite service, or a television receive-only satellite program distributor, who makes available for purchase, by subscribers or customers, multiple channels of video programming.” 47 U.S.C. § 522(13).

⁶ 22 U.S.C. §§ 611(b)(1) & (d).

⁷ See 5 CFR §§ 5.1, *et seq.*; *id.* § 5.100.

⁸ 47 U.S.C. § 624(d)(1); 22 U.S.C. § 611(b)(1). Section 611(c) of FARA provides that, except “as provided in subsection (d) of this section, the term ‘agent of a foreign principal’ means--(1) any person who acts as an agent, representative, employee, or servant, or any person who acts in any other capacity at the order, request, or under the direction or control, of a foreign principal or of a person any of whose activities are directly or indirectly supervised, directed, controlled, financed, or subsidized in whole or in major part by a foreign principal, and who directly or through any other person--(i) engages within the United States in political activities for or in the interests of such

states that the “term ‘agent of a foreign principal’ does not include any news or press service or association organized under the laws of the United States or of any State or other place subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, or any newspaper, magazine, periodical, or other publication for which there is on file with the United States Postal Service information in compliance with section 3611 of Title 39, published in the United States, solely by virtue of any bona fide news or journalistic activities, including the solicitation or acceptance of advertisements, subscriptions, or other compensation therefor, so long as it is at least 80 per centum beneficially owned by, and its officers and directors, if any, are citizens of the United States, and such news or press service or association, newspaper, magazine, periodical, or other publication, is not owned, directed, supervised, controlled, subsidized, or financed, and none of its policies are determined by any foreign principal defined in subsection (b) of this section, or by any agent of a foreign principal required to register” under FARA.⁹

The NDAA also requires that “[n]ot later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this section, and not less frequently than every 6 months thereafter, the Commission shall transmit to Congress a report that summarizes the contents of the reports submitted by United States-based foreign media outlets under subsection (a) during the preceding 6-month period.”¹⁰ On March 11, 2024, the Commission released a Public Notice reiterating its ongoing obligations under the NDAA and directing United States-based foreign media outlets subject to the NDAA reporting requirements to submit reports to the Commission’s established e-mail inbox by April 11, 2024.¹¹ The Commission set this deadline to enable it to comply with the NDAA’s requirement that it submit a Report to Congress “not less frequently than every 6 months.”¹² The Commission also stated that, in compliance with the NDAA, it would make publicly available on its website each submission by a United States-based foreign media outlet no later than the earlier of (1) 30 days after the outlet submits its report to the Commission or (2) the date on which the Commission transmits its report to Congress.¹³

Submissions. The Commission did not receive any registrations in the six-month period between October 13, 2023, and April 11, 2024, including in response to its March Public Notice.

foreign principal; (ii) acts within the United States as a public relations counsel, publicity agent, information-service employee or political consultant for or in the interests of such foreign principal; (iii) within the United States solicits, collects, disburses, or dispenses contributions, loans, money, or other things of value for or in the interest of such foreign principal; or (iv) within the United States represents the interests of such foreign principal before any agency or official of the Government of the United States; and (2) any person who agrees, consents, assumes or purports to act as, or who is or holds himself out to be, whether or not pursuant to contractual relationship, an agent of a foreign principal as defined in clause (1) of this subsection.” 22 U.S.C. § 611(c).

⁹ 22 U.S.C. § 611(d).

¹⁰ 47 U.S.C. § 624(b).

¹¹ *Media Bureau Reminds United States-based Foreign Media Outlets of Next Semi-Annual Disclosure Deadline*, Public Notice, DA 24-235 (MB Mar. 11, 2024). The Public Notice reminded respondents that the contents of their reports were subject to general requirements of accuracy of representations made to the Commission contained in the United States Code, 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

¹² *Id.* at 3. As discussed above, the statute requires covered entities to file reports with the Commission on an ongoing basis, not less frequently than every six months. It similarly requires the Commission to report to Congress the results of those submissions not less frequently than every six months thereafter. *Id.*

¹³ *Id.* at 3, citing 47 U.S.C. § 624(c).