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Office of Inspector General
US Department of State
Room 8100, SA-3
2201 C Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20520-0308
oighotline@state.gov

Dear Office of Inspector General,

This is a complaint and request for a formal inquiry into a group known as PropOrNot (website propornot.com).

The Office of Inspector General should investigate the following:

1. Whether or not PropOrNot or affiliated entities have received federal funds.
2. Whether or not PropOrNot was in contact with the federal government (Department of State, Broadcasting Board of Governors, Voice of America), and the nature of that contact if it occurred.
3. Whether or not PropOrNot was in contact with entities in receipt of federal funds (Radio Free Europe/Liberty, the Atlantic Council, Center for European Policy Analysis), and the nature of that contact if it occurred.

On November 24, 2016, the Washington Post published a story entitled, "Russian Propaganda Effort Helped Spread 'Fake News' During the Election, Experts Say". The Washington Post describes PropOrNot as "a nonpartisan collection of researchers with foreign policy, military and technology backgrounds".

On December 1, 2016, the New Yorker published a story entitled, "The Propaganda about Russian Propaganda". An alleged spokesperson for PropOrNot admitted that some of the group's 40 members include people who have worked for the government. Keith Chu, a

spokesperson for Senator Ron Wyden's office, stated that one of PropOrNot's group members claimed to be a former US Department of State employee.

On its website, PropOrNot maintains a list of websites it has identified as Russian propaganda outlets. The blacklist includes media outlets such as CounterPunch, Truth-Out, Naked Capitalism, and Wikileaks. Please see attachment "PropOrNot Blacklist" for full list of websites. PropOrNot has called for the news media outlets on its blacklist to be criminally investigated by federal law enforcement agencies. On its FAQ page, PropOrNot has stated, "We strongly suspect that some of the individuals involved have violated the Espionage Act, the Foreign Agent Registration Act, and other related laws, but determining that is up to the FBI and the DOJ."

On November 17, 2016, the PropOrNot website included a list of "allies". This list of allies included Polygraph Fact-Check, InterpreterMag, CEPA Infowar Project, and the Digital Forensics Research Lab.

As of November 30, 2016, the PropOrNot website has changed the title of this list from "allies" to "related projects". PropOrNot's list of allies included websites being run directly by the federal government or by entities in receipt of federal government funds.

- Polygraph (aka Polygraph Fact-Check) runs the website polygraph.info. On its "about" page, Polygraph identifies itself as being run by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (a Broadcasting Board of Governors grantee) and Voice of America (a federal government office within the Broadcasting Board of Governors).

- The Interpreter (aka InterpreterMag) runs the website interpretermag.com. On December 23, 2015, The Interpreter announced on its website that it was becoming a project of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. On January 6, 2016, Radio Free Europe/Liberty's website (rferl.org) announced that The Interpreter was now being sponsored by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (a grantee of the Broadcasting Board of Governors).

- The Center for European Policy Analysis (aka CEPA Infowar Project) runs the websites infowar.cepa.org and cepa.org. According to usaspending.gov, the Center for European Policy Analysis has received federal funds from both the Department of State and the Department of

Defense.

- The Digital Forensic Research Lab is project of the Atlantic Council (atlanticcouncil.org). According to usaspending.gov, the Atlantic Council has received numerous federal funding awards from the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Energy.

If the federal government or federal funds were involved in the creation or promotion of PropOrNot, this would be a serious violation of the 1st Amendment and the Smith-Mundt Act. The 1st Amendment guarantees the freedom of press and prohibits the US government from suppressing free speech. The Smith-Mundt Act prohibits the Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors from using their federal funding to promote propaganda within the United States. The Office of Inspector General should also investigate other possible violations of federal law, regulations, and policy.

I authorize the Office of Inspector General to release my name and my email address XXX@yahoo.fr in connection with this complaint.

I request to be notified by email if an investigation is initiated. I also request to be notified by email if the investigation is closed and the results of that investigation.

Please contact me at XXX@yahoo.fr if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Thierry Meyssan
Chairman of the Voltaire Network International
Editor in chief of voltairenet.org