

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1604

August 3, 2016

Joseph Cirincione
President
Ploughshares Fund
1100 Vermont Ave NW #300
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Cirincione,

After the Obama administration cited your organization, the Ploughshares Fund, as a key surrogate in its selling of the Iran nuclear deal, the attention of the media and the American public turned to your group. Ploughshares' contributions, totaling \$700,000 to National Public Radio (NPR) over the past several years, raised concerns of bias and journalistic ethics. Specifically, your behavior as the leader of this organization during the Iran deal debate has left many with questions.

After news broke of Ploughshares' significant financial contributions to NPR, it was also discovered that no disclosure of these gifts were made, either by you or by NPR, when you appeared on NPR on March 23, 2015. This disclosure "breakdown" prompted the NPR Ombudsman to conduct a review of NPR's processes. The Ombudsman explained that when guests appear on NPR, they are "asked to disclose whether he or she is funded in a way that might be a conflict." What is disturbing to outside observers is that NPR is "looking into why the Cirincione interview in particular did not raise any red flags" at the time, though it obviously it had to be corrected.

Your enthusiastic defense of Ploughshares' conduct after these revelations did not acknowledge or apologize for any mistakes. I do not yet know if your organization had similar problems with other news outlets. I am concerned that this NPR incident it is part of a broader pattern of deceit. While you decried the intimidation of journalists as a result of "hate tweets" in an article you published recently, you did not mention the buying of media coverage, or the purchase of journalists, issues which several news stories have raised.

Your organization's significant and undisclosed financial contributions to public radio on the most complicated and important foreign policy issue of 2015, if not the decade, negatively impacted the American public. As a 501(c)(3), the Ploughshares Fund, and you as its leader, owe the American public answers on the following issues that are still outstanding:

1. Did you disclose your organization's financial contributions to NPR when you appeared on NPR? If no, why not? Please consider interviews not just focused on Iran, such as "Unsecured Nuclear Material Poses Risks," from April 12, 2010, in which you brought up Iran. Neither you nor NPR disclosed Ploughshares' significant financial contributions during this show. Other instances where you failed to disclose Ploughshares' contributions appear to include April 11, 2010, April 14, 2010, December 5, 2011, and February 8, 2012.
2. When Ploughshares' financial contributions were not disclosed when you were on NPR, did you follow up to have that error corrected? If no, why not? An amendment to the NPR transcript of your March 23, 2015 interview was made after the AP story came out, but that was after more than a year.
3. Did Ploughshares request that its donations from 2006 and 2010 not be disclosed in the NPR annual report? These two gifts totaled \$150,000 and the 2010 gift occurred at an important time in the debate on Iran.
4. Did the White House contact you about your NPR interviews and request you use any material or talking points? You have visited the White House almost 30 times in the last few years—years that were very critical for debate on the Iran deal. Your official visit to the White House on March 15, 2013 is questionably close to your March 23, 2015 appearance on NPR to discuss the Iran nuclear deal. Similarly, your official White House visit on April 6, 2010 was right before your April 12, 2010 NPR appearance.
5. Did you appear on media outlets other than NPR regarding Iran and also fail to disclose your organization's financial contributions?
6. Was this disclosure failure applicable to other Ploughshares-affiliated journalists or experts that NPR featured to discuss Iran? As the head of a nonprofit organization, I trust that you conduct sufficient oversight to ensure your staff are open and transparent about the group's financial giving. The NPR Ombudsman's Report found that there was "cause for concern...in the large number of Ploughshares-funded analysts and experts who made it on the air to talk up the deal, without any acknowledgment of that by NPR."
7. Did Ploughshares financially contribute to NPR this year? If yes, has NPR accepted Ploughshares' financial contribution this year? Is Ploughshares planning on financially contributing to NPR next year? As you are aware, the NPR Ombudsman concluded, "in the case of grants such as the one from Ploughshares, which are intended to fund reporting on specific, highly controversial issues, my suggestion is that NPR consider not accepting them in the future if they contain such specific language."
8. Does Ploughshares often make very specific demands of the organizations to which it donates financially? In the case of your group's contribution to NPR, the money had the stipulation that it was to fund NPR's reporting on "U.S. nuclear weapons policy and budgets,

Iran's nuclear program, international nuclear security topics and U.S. policy toward nuclear security."

As we begin to live with the results of the Iran deal and "see missiles being shipped to Hezbollah, missiles being fired at U.S. aircraft carriers, and support to terrorist groups," to quote U.S. State Department spokesman John Kirby in June, the role the Ploughshares Fund played in championing this deal lead me to question your judgement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Pompeo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mike Pompeo
Member of Congress