

US Media Executive Includes Russia Today (RT) in the same “Challenge List” as ISIS and Boko Haram

By [RT](#)

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[RT](#)

Region: [Russia and FSU, USA](#)

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Newly-appointed chief of US Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), Andrew Lack, has named RT one of the agency’s main challenges alongside extremist groups like the Islamic State and Boko Haram.

Lack, the first chief executive of the BBG, mentioned RT in an [interview](#) with The New York Times.

“We are facing a number of challenges from entities like Russia Today which is out there pushing a point of view, the Islamic State in the Middle East and groups like Boko Haram,” he said. “But I firmly believe that this agency has a role to play in facing those challenges.”

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— Anissa Naouai (@ANOWRT) [January 23, 2015](#)

RT never expected to find itself on a list with the two most dangerous terrorist groups of the day and is seeking clarification on the comment.

“We are extremely outraged that the new head of the BBG mentions RT in the same breath as world’s number one terrorist army,” said Margarita Simonyan, RT’s editor-in-chief. “We see this as an international scandal and demand an explanation.”

Apart from BBG itself, RT is also seeking clarification from the US State Department and the US Embassy in Russia.

It’s not the first time the BBG, a bipartisan agency that supervises government-sponsored media, targeting international audiences, has referred to RT as a ‘challenge.’

“Let’s put together a plan of how much that would cost and how to do something that we could compete with Russia Today [RT] and then let’s go to the Hill and then let’s go to the White House and tell them what it’s going to cost to compete, and let’s see if we can do it,” BBG chairman Jeffrey Shell said in August 2014.

RT is viewed this way “because there’s a terror in London and in Washington of new upstarts, of new information coming out and challenging the narratives that they have owned for the last 50 years of so,” editor of politics.co.uk Ian Dunt told RT.

This time the New York Times article mentions RT’s “*significant American presence*” and argues Russia “*poured millions*” into its US bureau and the Sputnik news agency.

US politicians have lashed out at RT in the past. John Kerry attacked the channel for its coverage of the Ukraine crisis last spring and called RT a “*propaganda bullhorn*.”

RT news is terror, terrifies the hell out of Washington with its truth telling.
[#NEWSISNOTTERROR](#)

— Anthony Thomas (@mvuyisi31) [January 23, 2015](#)

Following Kerry’s rant, Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov decried John Kerry’s comments about RT as “*uncivilized*” and “*prosecutorial*.” “[*The West*] has been convinced for some time that it has a full monopoly on mass media,” said Lavrov in a statement. “*Russia Today has won a large audience in the US and Western Europe, not to mention in Latin America and the Arab world*.”

[READ MORE: ‘Propaganda bullhorn’: John Kerry attacks RT during Ukraine address](#)

“As a broadcaster, RT does indeed present a challenge to US international broadcasting in terms of competing for viewership,” said Director of Advocacy and Communications of the International Press Institute (IPI) Steven M. Ellis. “But RT obviously does not present the type of threat to journalists’ physical security that entities such as the Islamic State group or Boko Haram pose. Mr. Lack could have phrased his comments more carefully to make this distinction clear, and we hope he will do so in the future.”

[#newsisnotterror](#) When they start attacking you, you know they are worried. In depth reports & truth are the reason why RT has grown so much.

— Brendan Bacon (@gomedie_ie) [January 23, 2015](#)

US television professionals have, however, been more amenable to RT and have nominated its reporting for media awards. RT received an Emmy nomination for its series of Guantanamo hunger strike reports in 2014, and the channel was earlier nominated for Emmies in 2010 and 2012.

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