



PBS Pulls Film Linked To Chinese Foreign Agent Over Editorial Concerns In Response To DCNF Report

<https://dailycaller.com/2020/05/28/pbs-chinese-propaganda-documentary/>



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- **PBS pulled a documentary produced with a foreign agent of the Chinese government over concerns that it failed to meet the outlet’s editorial standards.**
- **A PBS affiliate that aired the film is also conducting an internal review into the funding behind the documentary, which aired twice in California earlier in May.**
- **The review is a response to a report from the Daily Caller News Foundation.**

PBS pulled a documentary produced in association with a Chinese foreign agent over concerns that it did not meet the federally-funded media outlet’s editorial standards.

PBS SoCal, a PBS affiliate that co-produced the film “Voices from the Frontline: China’s War on Poverty,” is also conducting an internal review of the funding for the documentary, the organization said in a statement.

PBS made the decision in response to the Daily Caller News Foundation’s May 14 report that the film was produced in association with CGTN, a Chinese media company. The U.S. Department of Justice requires CGTN to register as a foreign agent of China.

Robert Lawrence Kuhn, a businessman who touts ties to the Chinese government and CGTN, was the lead producer of the film, which aired earlier in May on PBS SoCal and its sister station, KCET.

The two stations received more than \$5.5 million in federal funds in 2019 through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Tax filings show that Kuhn’s charity, The Kuhn Foundation, donated \$70,000 to PBS SoCal between 2015 and 2018. ([RELATED: PBS Stations That Received Millions In Federal Funds Partnered With Chinese Foreign Agent On Pro-Beijing Film](#))

PBS notified PBS SoCal, which is also known as KOCE, on May 20 about concerns with the funding behind the film.

“The specific concern they had was around the funding and the funding relationship,” PBS SoCal CEO Andrew Russell said in a statement, adding that PBS headquarters said that “they did not find concerns in other areas of editorial integrity.”

PBS SoCal said that the documentary passed its editorial standards and adhered to FCC guidelines before its initial airing on May 11.

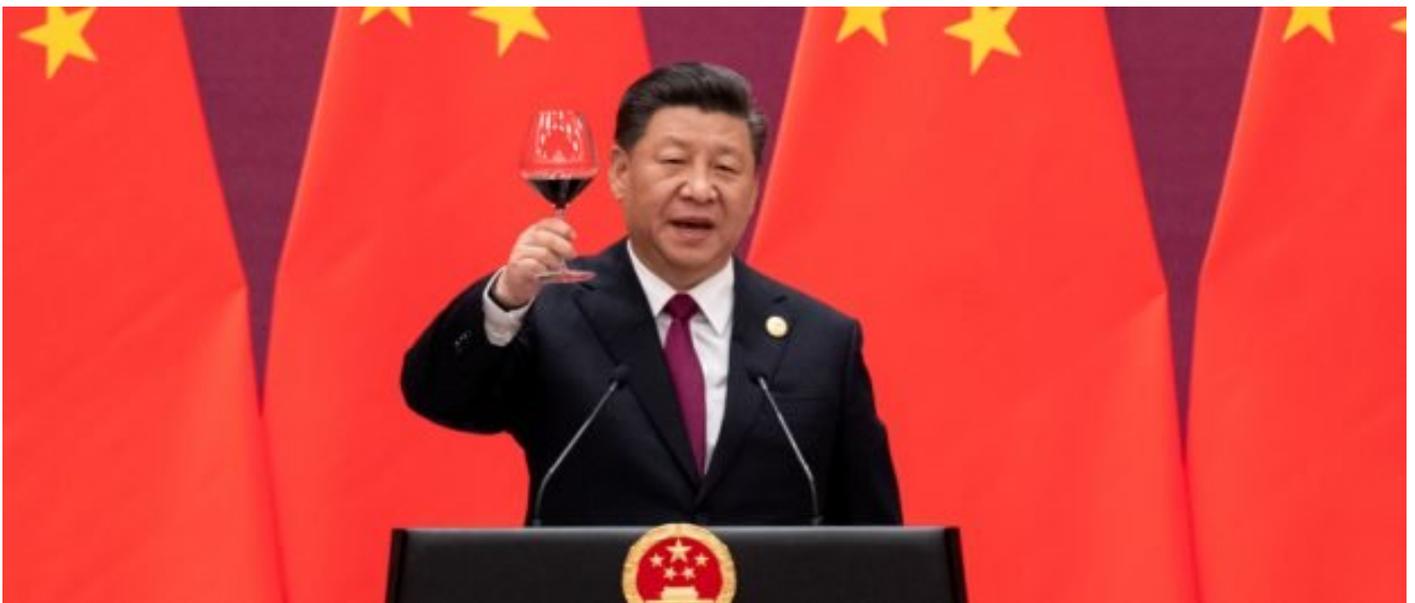
But after PBS headquarters examined the film, the outlet determined that it “did not meet PBS corporate guidelines,” PBS SoCal said in a statement.

“Thus, PBS decided to pull the show from its streaming services on the PBS App and PBS passport.”

“Our organization is planning to reassess the film as a result of these decisions made earlier this week, analyzing the content and the production further to validate our original decision to air the documentary,” the affiliate said.

PBS SoCal and KCET will not air the film while it is under review, though other affiliates who previously planned to air the documentary will be permitted to do so.

Current.org, a media trade publication, [first reported](#) that PBS was reviewing the documentary.



Chinese President Xi Jinping proposes a toast during the welcome banquet for leaders attending the Belt and Road Forum at the Great Hall of the People on April 26, 2019 in Beijing, China. (Photo by Nicolas Asfour – Pool/Getty Images)

The documentary tracks five Chinese families that received help through a program that Chinese President Xi Jinping initiated in 2013 to eradicate extreme poverty by 2020.

The film aired on PBS SoCal in 2019, but received little attention at the time. But the Chinese government’s activities in the media have received heightened scrutiny as Beijing has ramped up its propaganda efforts in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Chinese government officials and propaganda outlets have sought to displace blame for the pandemic, which originated in Wuhan late in 2019.

Kuhn has been a staunch defender of Beijing’s response to the pandemic.

“China’s mobilization is unprecedented in global health history. Nowhere could it work like it works in China. The reason it works is because the party works, the Communist Party of China,” Kuhn said during an episode of his show “The Watcher,” which airs on CGTN.

“President Xi Jinping calls for fighting the outbreak in an open and transparent manner. That’s the key: transparency, complete transparency. As China has done and is updating all confirmed patients and updating all the data everyday.”

Kuhn has been a frequent guest on Chinese media outlets controlled by the government. He has also openly touted his ties to top Chinese government officials, including in the State Council Information Office, which is responsible for publishing foreign propaganda.

Kuhn has also touted his China Reform Friendship Medal, the highest honor bestowed on foreigners. He received the award in 2018 at an event that Xi hosted.

Kuhn defended his film in a statement to Current, saying it was a “shame” that PBS has pulled the documentary due to what he said were “extraneous internal political matters in the United States.”

He also asserted that conservative media outlets unfairly targeted the film. Fox News published a story based on the DCNF’s report about the documentary.

Kuhn, PBS and PBS SoCal did not respond to multiple requests for comment before the DCNF published its story earlier in May.

PBS did not respond to requests for comment on Thursday.

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