

Meet The Shadowy Biden And Obama Group That Ran The Federal Government's Censorship Scheme

BY: [MARGOT CLEVELAND](#)



 Censorship banner over the Disinfo Cloud dashboard

IMAGE CREDIT [TRADOC G-2 OE ENTERPRISE/YOUTUBE/FDRLST/CANVA](#)

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The State Department's Global Engagement Center used a cutout corporation headed by a former intelligence officer to fund and promote the blacklisting of conservative media outlets and other censorship endeavors, research by The Federalist reveals.

When Elon Musk gave a group of independent journalists access to internal Twitter communications, the resulting "Twitter Files" quickly revealed the existence of a Censorship-Industrial Complex that [included](#) an array of federal agencies colluding with social media companies to censor disfavored speech. One of the many federal players was the State Department's Global Engagement Center (GEC) — but GEC did much more than cajole tech giants to censor viewpoints the government didn't like.

As The Federalist previously reported, GEC [funded](#) the development of censorship tools and [used](#) “government employees to act as sales reps pitching the censorship products to Big Tech.” Further investigation into its operations now reveals the government’s GEC used one or more for-profit businesses to lead four separate censorship initiatives with contractors at times engaging in “inherently governmental functions.”

This graphic from GEC provides a simple summary of its Technology Engagement Team (TET) initiatives, but Disinfo Cloud provides the best entry point to understanding GEC’s other activities.



Disinfo Cloud Casts a Big Shadow

According to GEC's webpage, Disinfo Cloud is a "platform that acts as a repository to catalogue an ever-growing list of CPD tools and technologies," with "CPD" standing for "countering propaganda and disinformation." While originally available only to ".mil and .gov" users, access was later opened to the private sector.

Then as part of its "Silicon Valley Engagement" initiative, GEC [pushed](#) social media companies to join Disinfo Cloud, which helped users identify technologies for censoring speech. This has huge First Amendment implications because although many details of Disinfo Cloud's operations and funding remain obscure, it's clear U.S. tax dollars funded both the platform's development and maintenance.

A State Department spokesman previously [explained](#) that an outside group, Park Advisors, managed Disinfo Cloud, awarding the group approximately \$300,000 to manage the platform. Christina Nemr, a former State Department employee who had been a founding member of the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) program, [served](#) as the director of Park Advisors and the administrator of Disinfo Cloud.

Park Advisors Overshadowed the GEC

While Disinfo Cloud was a GEC initiative, it appears Park Advisors and Nemr controlled the platform at DisinfoCloud.com, which has since been [shuttered](#). Park Advisors has also recently removed the content of its webpage, leaving only the landing page. A still-available [video](#), however, shows Nemr explaining the repository.

After Disinfo Cloud identified a tool for countering so-called “disinformation,” Nemr’s team would conduct open-source research to learn everything possible about the tool, including who made it and what technology was involved, and then summarize the research in a one- to three-page report. Next, Disinfo Cloud would contact the tool’s creator, requesting a remote demonstration and seeking more technical details, after which it would compile a 10- to 12-page report on the technology. Disinfo Cloud had reviewed about 200 different technologies, which were added to its repository.

Disinfo Cloud also helped users — including private social media companies — identify the best available censorship tools “to counter propaganda and disinformation.”

Publicly available information indicates Park Advisors and Nemr did much more than create and manage Disinfo Cloud. Its subscribers also received a weekly “Disinfo Digest,” which Nemr [launched](#) in December 2020 to inform users “of the latest news, events, funding opportunities, and other updates related to disinformation, including from the tech vendors featured on Disinfo Cloud.”

Along with promoting its own platform, Disinfo Cloud’s Twitter account also promoted Disinfo Digest and the [Tech Demo Series](#). The account also amplified the marketing of private censorship tools and companies, such as the unreliable media-ratings organizations Global Disinformation Index and NewsGuard.



Disinfo Cloud Plugs Tech Demo Series

The aforementioned government-promoted Tech Demo Series purported to feature “promising technologies to employ against the problems of propaganda and disinformation.” But the fact that Disinfo Cloud highlighted the Tech Demo Series suggests the infomercial-like demonstrations of censorship technology were open to non-governmental groups, such as Big Tech.



However, the GEC webpage [says](#) the audience for these virtual demos “is composed of U.S. government counterparts and foreign partners,” leaving unclear whether the Tech Demo Series marketed censorship technology to outsiders and, if so, how. It is also unclear whether Disinfo Cloud or GEC hosted the Tech Demo Series.

Park Advisors Controlled GEC's Testbed

While Disinfo Cloud's role in the Tech Demo Series is unclear, GEC's "Testbed" operated from Disinfo Cloud, and Park Advisors also managed that government initiative.

According to GEC's webpage, "[Testbed](#)" "tests specific tools or technologies against a submitted proposal," over the course of six to eight weeks to see how successful the tools are in countering supposed propaganda in "real operational" situations. While GEC's current descriptor of "Testbed" says the State Department organization "solicits real challenges of the U.S. government (USG) to counter foreign propaganda and disinformation," when Park Advisors ran Disinfo Cloud and Testbed, the GEC webpage [explained](#) that the two initiatives were used by "academia, private sector, and tech vendors," and directed users to ask Disinfo Cloud for assistance in drafting "a test proposal for a tool."

Of the 200-some technologies on Disinfo Cloud, only some piloted on Testbed. But according to Nemr, GEC paid vendors \$25,000 to complete the six- to eight-week assessment.

Park Advisors Organized GEC Challenges

In addition to managing Disinfo Cloud and the GEC Testbed, Park Advisors was also involved in GEC's "Tech Challenges." Nemr, the Park Advisors director, even boasted of [organizing](#) three international Tech Challenges (in Asia, Africa, and Europe). The GEC [webpage](#) also [credited](#) Park Advisors and Disinfo Cloud with collaborating with the State Department for the U.S.-Africa, U.S.-Paris, and U.S.-Taiwan Tech Challenges.

Nemr [stressed](#) that eight awards were granted. At least two of the monetary awards went to organizations targeting conservatives — including news outlets — for censorship, namely the [Global Disinformation Index](#) and the [Institute of Strategic Dialogue](#). Despite purporting to fund foreign-based tech experts "to implement a tool, locally, to address misinformation and disinformation challenges in the region," these U.S.-Paris Challenge awardees reached squarely into the American marketplace of speech.

The Global Disinformation Index (GDI) purports to assess the "disinformation risk" of media outlets and [declares](#) conservative media, including The Federalist, as the "Ten Riskiest Online News Outlets." In contrast, the supposedly "Ten Lowest-Risk Online News Outlets" consist of a who's who of left-wing legacy outlets, including those that regularly botched big political stories, such as the Russia-collusion hoax and the Hunter Biden laptop story.

At the 2021 U.S.-Paris Tech Challenge, GDI's founders explained the goal of the risk-rating technology: to disrupt the funding of so-called disinformation by steering away "ad dollars."

Danny Rogers, the American partner in the initiative, [stressed](#) in the team's presentation that "over a dozen ad-tech companies," covering "20 different media markets," used GDI's technology. That technology succeeded in "cutting the number of ad options" by over half, "redirecting millions of dollars away from disinformation peddlers toward quality journalism," Rogers boasted.

Significantly, after learning GEC had selected the Global Disinformation Index as one of the winners of the U.S.-Paris Challenge, Rogers' U.K. partner, Clare Melford, [explained](#) that the award, in addition to allowing GDI to increase its "language coverage capability," would also allow GDI to expand its risk assessments into video news and bolster the infrastructure "underpinning all of the GDI's activities ... so that the ad tech base can offer advertisers the chance to choose which their ads support."

In other words, our government paid for the infrastructure of GDI's ratings system that resulted in conservative news outlets being blacklisted — [\\$100,000](#) worth of U.S. tax dollars in total, funneled by the GEC to the Global Disinformation Index through Park Advisors.

GEC also used Park Advisors to pay a second winner of the U.S.-Paris Tech Challenge, the Institute of Strategic Dialogue, which pitched its "Beam" technology that purports "to detect, track & measure online manipulation, disinformation, and harassment."

"Beam," according to the [Institute of Strategic Dialogue](#), had [already](#) been "used by 300 civil society groups in the U.S. around the elections." But the tech challenge prize, the organization [explained](#), would allow it to build "a new integration to study state-backed manipulation of Wikipedia."

The State Department [confirmed](#) it funded, through Disinfo Cloud, the Institute of Strategic Dialogue's research of Russian disinformation tactics against Wikipedia. But that research applied more to Americans than those in Europe or Asia, as the study analyzed "the English-language Wikipedia page for the Russo-Ukrainian war" — another apparent contravention of the foreign-focused purpose of the U.S.-Paris Tech Challenge. The Institute for Strategic Dialogue, like the GDI, also has an [anti-conservative bias](#).

GEC Sponsors U.S.-Based Challenge

In addition to the international tech challenges, the GEC [sponsored](#) the “Countering COVID19 Disinformation Challenge,” run by the Department of Defense’s National Security Innovation Network. Winners of that challenge received \$25,000 to pilot their technology on GEC’s Testbed, “hosted by Disinfo Cloud.”

One of the winners of this challenge was the irresponsible, reliability-ratings company NewsGuard. Like GDI, NewsGuard also [champions](#) leftist outlets that peddled the Russia-collusion hoax and wrongly framed the Hunter Biden laptop as Russian disinformation, while branding conservative outlets such as The Federalist as unreliable.

Park Advisors' Funding Is Shadowy

That GEC used Disinfo Cloud as a pass-through to award \$100,000 to the Global Disinformation Index, an unspecified amount to the Institute of Strategic Dialogue, and \$25,000 to NewsGuard and other winners of the Covid challenge makes no obvious sense — unless the State Department sought to avoid a public connection to the funding.

But even now knowing the GEC funded these censorship endeavors through Disinfo Cloud helps little because the State Department's funding of that platform is hazy.

While a State Department spokesman said GEC had awarded Park Advisors approximately \$300,000 in 2018 to manage Disinfo Cloud, a search of government contracts and grants fails to show either [Park Advisors](#) or the related entity [Park Capital Investment Group](#) receiving any such award. The only documented payment to either entity appears in 2020 and shows a Covid [loan](#) of nearly \$40,000 to Park Capital Investment Group.

Adding further mystery to the funding of Park Advisors — aka Park Capital Investment Group — is the inspector general's audit of GEC, which included a review of a nearly \$3 million award to Park Capital Investment Group. But that award also does not appear at [USASpending.gov](#). In fact, a search by award numbers also fails to show GEC's awards to Democracy Council of California or CNA Corporation.



The State Department ignored The Federalist's request for clarification of the funding of Park Advisors. The Federalist's efforts to speak with the founders and original managing partner of Park Advisors and Park Capital Investment Group also proved unsuccessful. Nemr — who has since [founded](#) the company [Becera](#), which has already scored nearly a million dollars from the State Department as a [sub-awardee](#) — also did not respond to multiple inquiries.

GEC Let Contractors Run Censorship

While the lack of transparency related to the millions of federal grants awarded by GEC proves troubling, the larger concern is what GEC paid Park Advisors and presumably other contractors to do: fund and coordinate the censorship of Americans' speech and the blacklisting of our supposedly free press.

Further exacerbating the scandal are audits from the Office of Inspector General that reveal GEC lacked [oversight](#) of contractors and [had insufficient](#) internal controls "to ensure contractors did not perform inherently governmental functions."

Unfortunately, the State Department doesn't consider funding the development of censorship tools and marketing them to silence disfavored speakers any problem at all.

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