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Description of document: Copies of Selected National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Inspector General (OIG) Investigation Reports 2022-2024

Requested date: April/May/June 2025

Release date: 28-July-2025

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Source of document: FOIA Request
Office of the Inspector General
NASA Headquarters
Room 8V69 300
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Washington, D.C. 20546
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FOIA.gov

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NASA OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS
SUITE 8U71, 300 E ST SW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20546-0001

July 28, 2025

Re: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request Number
25-00044-IG-F / OIG # 2025-69
25-00045-IG-F / OIG # 2025-70
25-00046-IG-F / OIG # 2025-71
Initial Determination

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. § 552), on April 27, 2025, May 7, 2025, and June 8, 2025 you submitted requests to the NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG). Your FOIA requests were received by this office on June 25, 2025 and assigned tracking numbers listed above, respectively. Specifically, you sought the following records:

"Closing memos of the following NASA OIG investigations:

- # 25-00044-IG-F / OIG # 2025-69
1. O-KE-20-0070-O
 2. O-NJ-20-0147-O
 3. O-LB-21-0016-S
 4. O-AR-21-0023-S
 5. C-MA-21-0198-O
 6. O-RM-21-0013-S
 7. O-AR-21-0022-S
 8. O-ST-22-0180-S
 9. C-MA-22-0072-P
 10. O-JS-22-0108-S
 11. O-GO-22-0140-HL-S
 12. O-LB-22-0202-HL-P
 13. O-JS-22-0190-HL-P

25-00045-IG-F / OIG # 2025-70

1. O-KE-24-0064-
2. C-WA-24-0023-P
3. O-LA-24-0115-S
4. O-JS-24-0119-Z
5. O-KE-24-0128-S
6. O-MA-24-0142-HL-S
7. O-JS-24-0148-Z
8. O-GL-24-0180-P
9. O-JS-24-0197-S
10. O-GL-24-0191-Z
11. O-HS-24-0226-HL-Z
12. O-KE-24-0241-P

25-00046-IG-F / OIG # 2025-71

1. O-ST-23-0023-S
2. O-KE-23-0012-S
3. O-GO-23-0056-S
4. O-JS-23-0073-MR
5. O-JS-23-0128-Z
6. O-JS-23-0134-S
7. C-GO-23-0142-Z
8. O-MA-23-0159-MN
9. O-LA-23-0185-Z
10. O-GO-23-0189-HL-P
11. O-KE-23-0191-HL-P
12. O-GO-23-0221-P
13. O-GO-23-0237-HL-S
14. O-JS-23-0240-HL-Z
15. O-LB-23-0161-P”

In response to your FOIA requests, we conducted a search for responsive records within OIG’s respective business units. Our search identified responsive information releasable under the FOIA as described below. Enclosed with this letter are the requested responsive records.

Certain exemptions have been applied to withhold information from the enclosed responsive documents that is not releasable under FOIA exemptions (b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C), and (b)(7)(E). The exempt information has been redacted. In applying these exemptions, we have determined that the withheld information would cause foreseeable harm if released.

FOIA exemption (b)(5) protects inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency. The courts have interpreted this exemption to incorporate the deliberative process privilege, the general purpose of which is to prevent injury to the quality of agency decisions. The exemption protects not merely documents, such as predecisional documents, recommendations, and

opinions on legal or policy matters, but also the integrity of the deliberative process itself where the exposure of that process would result in harm.

Exemption (b)(6) exempts from disclosure personnel and similar files, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. Exemption (b)(7)(C) provides protection for law enforcement information and records compiled for law enforcement purposes, the disclosure of which “could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy”. Exemption (b)(7)(C) is routinely applied to protect the personal privacy interest of law enforcement personnel involved in conducting investigations. Disclosure of the mere fact that an individual is mentioned in an agency's law enforcement files carries a stigmatizing connotation cognizable under FOIA Exemption (b)(7)(C). See, e.g., *Fund for Constitutional Government v. National Archives & Records Service*, 656 F.2d 856, 865 (D.C. Cir. 1981). Numerous courts have recognized that individuals' privacy interests are substantial given the nature of law enforcement records, whether they are suspects, informants, witnesses or investigators. See, e.g., *Fitzgibbon v. CIA*, 911 F.2d 755, 767 (D.C. Cir. 1990); *Dunkelberger v. DOJ*, 906 F.2d 779, 781 (D.C.Cir.1990); *Stern v. FBI*, 737 F.2d 84, 91-92 (D.C. Cir. 1984)); see also *Neely v. FBI*, 208 F.3d 461, 464-66 (4th Cir. 2000). Among other concerns, an individual's connection to particular investigations can result in harassment, annoyance, and embarrassment. See, e.g., *Halpern v. FBI*, 181 F.3d 279, 296-97 (2nd Cir.1999); *Manna v. DOJ*, 51 F.3d 1158, 1166 (3rd Cir.), cert. denied, 516 U.S. 975, 116 S. Ct. 477, 133 L.Ed.2d 405 (1995); *Nix v. United States*, 572 F.2d 998, 1005-06 (4th Cir.1978).

Exemption (b)(7)(E) affords protection to all law enforcement information that “would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law.”

For your information, Congress excluded three discrete categories of law enforcement and national security records from the requirements of the FOIA. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(c) (2006 & Supp. IV 2010). This response is limited to those records that are subject to the requirements of the FOIA. This is a standard notification that is given to all our requesters and should be taken as an indication that excluded records do, or do not, exist.

You may contact our FOIA Public Liaison, Frank LaRocca at (202) 358-2575 for any further assistance and to discuss any aspects of your request. Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, e-mail at ogis@nara.gov; telephone at 202-741-5770; toll free at 1-877-684-6448; or facsimile at 202-741-5769.

You also have the right to appeal this initial determination to the NASA OIG FOIA Appeal Designee. Pursuant to 14 CFR §1206.700(b), the appeal must (1) be in writing; (2) be addressed to the following:

NASA, Office of Inspector General

Headquarters
300 E Street, S.W., Suite 8V39
Washington, D.C. 20546-0001
Attn: Robert Steinau, NASA OIG Senior Official;


(3) be identified clearly on the envelope and in the letter as “Freedom of Information Act Appeal”; (4) include a copy of the request for the Agency record and a copy of the adverse initial determination; (5) to the extent possible, state the reasons why the requester believes the adverse initial determination should be reversed; and (6) must be postmarked and sent to the NASA OIG Senior Official within 90 calendar days of the date of receipt of the initial determination.

Sincerely,

**Michael
Graham**

Michael Graham

Acting Assistant Inspector General for Investigations
OIG FOIA Officer – Investigations

 Digitally signed by Michael
Graham
Date: 2025.07.29 10:37:58
-04'00'

Enclosures

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Approved:



Office of Inspector General
Office of Investigations

O-KE-20-0070-O

January 20, 2023

CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE IN SPACE (CASIS)
6905 N. Wickham Road, Suite 500
Melbourne, FL 32940

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

CASE CLOSING: This investigation was initiated in December 2019 based on information from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Center for the Advancement of Science in Space (CASIS), alleging that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Melbourne, FL, colluded with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) International Space Station (ISS) Research Integration Office, NASA, Johnson Space Center (JSC) and others to circumvent the normal CASIS screening process required for research projects sent to the ISS National Laboratory (NL) through CASIS, resulting in millions of dollars being given to companies that entered into private deals with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and/or (b) (6), (b) (7)(C).

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated that CASIS allegedly carried two sets of books. One set of books was called "CASIS Projects" and the other was called "National Lab Projects." (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) described all of the ISS research projects tracked as CASIS Projects as "above-the-table" because they were subject to screening, review and audit in accordance with the NASA Cooperative Agreement that funded CASIS. However, the projects tracked as National Lab Projects were all "under-the-table" according to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) because there was no audit trail or oversight.

According to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) National Lab Projects were funded in one of two ways: 1) By NASA Mission Integration & Operation (MI&O) funds that were authorized by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) or 2) by CASIS research funds from the NASA Cooperative Agreement, which were obligated through Unfunded User Umbrella Agreements, an internal CASIS procurement vehicle created by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) to circumvent the normal process. From NASA's point of view, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) said MI&O funds from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) would appear to be above-the-table because (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) had the authority to spend this money and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) tracked it as going to CASIS for research. Per (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) directed CASIS via

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(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) on where (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) wanted the MI&O money to go. However, the MI&O funds were not entered into CASIS's budget and tracked, so accountability of this money was lost. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) estimated that CASIS received \$6 – 15M per year in MI&O funds, which was funding in addition to the \$15M a year that CASIS received from the NASA Cooperative Agreement.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated that on at least one occasion, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) allegedly used the process described above to give a company called Nanoracks LLC, 503 Forge River Rd, Webster, TX 77598, funding for a project, which no one other than (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) knew about. The Nanoracks payload, which included several projects, was put on the flight manifest to go to the ISS with no prior review and oversight because (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) circumvented the normal process of sending research to station.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated that normal oversight would have included an ITAR (International Traffic in Arms Regulations) review, but in this instance that was not done. According to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) one of the projects in the payload was a small Chinese satellite. Section 4.23 of NASA's Cooperative Agreement with CASIS expressly restricted the use of appropriated funds to fund activities related to China. While (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was the CASIS (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) found out about the satellite after it had already flown to the ISS and asked (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) if an ITAR review had been conducted. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) told (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) not to worry about it and said (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) had done (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) own ITAR review.

In February 2020, this matter was briefed to Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) National Security Division, Middle District of Florida, Tampa, and assigned to AUSA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). (b) (5)

After reviewing all relevant documents and after interviewing all relevant personnel, the allegations as set forth above were not corroborated. Accordingly, during an interview with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) had no control over the funding of CASIS projects. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) explained that MI&O funds did not get dispersed to CASIS either directly or indirectly. All MI&O money was spent on NASA prime contracts and Space Act Agreements, none of which involved CASIS. Per (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) each and every payload mission to the ISS was screened and vetted by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) office for any potential safety or ITAR violations. These missions included both NASA missions and the missions sponsored by CASIS through the Cooperative Agreement. Any mission involving a CASIS unfunded user umbrella agreement was also screened by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) office. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) denied colluding with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) or anyone else from CASIS to circumvent the screening process. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) had never received any compensation, kickbacks or other benefits from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) to either circumvent the screening process or to divert funding to CASIS. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) denied all allegations as set forth by the complainant.

An interview of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) Office of International and Interagency Relations (OIIR) was conducted in this matter. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was interviewed to obtain additional information pertaining to a Chinese experiment by the Beijing

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Institute of Technology (BIT) that flew to the ISS in June 2017 via Commercial Resupply Services (CRS) Mission 11 aboard a Space Exploration Technologies Corporation (SpaceX) Falcon 9 rocket. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) related that SpaceX and other commercial launch companies performed their own internal export compliance reviews of their payloads and certified compliance to NASA as part of their application for Authorization to Launch by NASA. Their payload reviews were done in accordance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, which are outlined under 14 CFR § 415 Subpart D, *Payload Review and Determination*.

With regard to the experiment in question, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated that BIT was a commercial customer of Nanoracks, an American company that provided standard rack-mounted laboratory facilities and microgravity space access to commercial customers using the U.S. National Laboratory on the ISS. Although the BIT experiment was launched in 2017, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) related the approval process for the mission began in 2015. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) provided a letter dated January 20, 2015, from former NASA Administrator Charles Bolden to John Culberson, U.S. House of Representatives in which Bolden described the BIT experiment and certified that *“these planned activities pose no risk of resulting in transfers of technology, data, or other information with national security or economic security implications to China or a Chinese owned company.”*

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) also provided a draft “Response to Questions” document dated July 16, 2015, which outlined NASA’s response to anticipated questions, which might be posed with regard to the BIT experiment. In response to the question *“How is China able to conduct an experiment on the ISS?”* the paper offered the following answer: *“NanoRacks developed their own hardware systems to interface with existing ISS facilities and arranges utilization of the ISS through the Center for Advancement of Science in Space, the manager of the U.S. National Lab on the ISS. Through this relationship, NanoRacks has provided commercial access to the ISS for a number of international entities over the last several years. To support this specific activity, NASA has conducted the necessary coordination with the other ISS partners and appropriately addressed all legislative requirements associated with bilateral engagement with China.”*

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) provided several other documents pertaining to the review and approval of the mission in question to include the following: SpaceX Mission Narrative to the FAA, dated September 28, 2016, and an FAA Interagency Letter to NASA, dated September 28, 2016, which essentially satisfied the requirements of 14 CFR § 415 Subpart D and provided FAA approval for the mission.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) also shared a May 2017 e-mail thread titled, *“Heads Up China”* from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), NASA Associate Administrator for International and Interagency Relations, to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), National Security Council, Office of the President. The thread began when (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) Nanoracks, contacted (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) to make (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) aware of the mission, which was due to launch the following month. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) wrote: *“We are flying on the next SpaceX launch in two weeks a DNA research project from Beijing Institute of Technology. It was approved by the previous administration, okayed by the Congressional Republicans and conforms to the Wolf amendment.”* (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) subsequently contacted NASA and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) responded by attaching Bolden’s 2015 letter and outlining the circumstances of the experiment and its approval.

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During this matter, multiple personal bank account records of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and other CASIS officials were extensively reviewed and analyzed. The corporate bank records of CASIS and Nanoracks were also extensively reviewed and analyzed. During these reviews there was no evidence of collusion, kickbacks, or other illegal and nefarious activity taking place related to allegations in this case. In addition, the bank records also disproved (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) allegations that CASIS carried two separate books for different NASA programs and missions.

(b) (5)

The investigation identified that CASIS made two membership payments of \$10,000 each to the Bill, Hillary, & Chelsea Clinton Foundation a.k.a. the Clinton Global Initiative on September 30, 2015, and on December 10, 2015, respectively. According to 2 C.F.R. § 200.454, "Membership costs in any civic, community organization, country club or social or dining club or organization are unallowable. Cost of memberships in organizations whose primary purpose is lobbying are unallowable." Of note, the 2013 C.F.R language that was in effect during the 2015 membership payments read "(c) Costs of membership in any civic or community organization are allowable with prior approval by the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity."

Based on these findings, on May 19, 2022, the NASA OIG issued a management referral to the NASA Director of International Space Stations. The referral identified that CASIS made two membership payments of \$10,000 each to the Bill, Hillary, & Chelsea Clinton Foundation a.k.a. the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) on September 30, 2015, and on December 10, 2015, respectively. The referral also provided three recommendations for NASA which included to: 1) Determine whether CASIS used funds derived from the NASA Cooperative Agreement in support of these membership payments; 2) Determine whether these membership payments were allowable under the Cooperative Agreement, Code of Federal Regulations, Grant and Cooperative Agreement Manuals, OMB Circulars, or any other relevant documents, policies, provisions, and regulations; and upon a finding that NASA funding was used by CASIS for an unallowable cost, 3) consider recouping the entirety of those funds from CASIS.

(b) (5)

On December 8, 2022, NASA management responded stating they would not seek to recoup the membership payments made by CASIS to the CGI. They cited the lack of documentation, the significant passage of time, staff turnover at CASIS, and the single document indicating that this expenditure had been approved (by CASIS).

In their response, NASA management also noted the 2013 version of 2 C.F.R. § 200.454, (which was in effect in 2015, when the payments were made), stated: "(c) Costs of membership in any civic or community organization are *allowable with prior approval* by the Federal awarding

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agency or pass-through entity.” (emphasis added). NASA was unable to provide any documentation substantiating prior NASA approval of these expenditures.

The management response noted this issue had shed light on the need for a better approval process and documentation of decisions made under the cooperative agreement between NASA and CASIS.

All evidence has been disposed of this matter. This case is closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) , KSC
DISTR: File

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O-NJ-20-0147-O

October 27, 2023

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

CASE CLOSING: In March of 2020, the NASA OIG received information from D4C Global (D4CG), Fairfax, VA, that their company had been hired by ASM International (ASM), Materials Park, OH, to assess ASM's security protocols. The assessment revealed that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), ASM, was responsible for reviewing publications and scientific projects to deconflict them for publication. On multiple occasions, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) attempted to elicit technical data from publications other ASM board members were reviewing. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was also a full-time Professor of Materials Science and Engineering at The Pennsylvania State University (PSU), State College, PA. Further analysis identified (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) as a member of China's 100 Talent's Program and the Fujian Provincial Hundred Talents program. Liu received funding from multiple U.S. Government agencies, to include NASA. Liu, as PSU's Principal Investigator (PI), received two NASA grants and six Jet Propulsion Labs (JPL) subcontracts totaling approximately \$1.3million.

Given (b) (6), (b) (7) foreign affiliations, the investigation sought to determine (b) (6), (b) (7) eligibility as a PI, and whether (b) (6), (b) (7) and/or PSU violated the False Claims Act by submitting false certifications purporting compliance with NASA's Restriction in Funding with China policy.

The matter was initially presented to the Middle District of Pennsylvania (MDPA), Criminal Division, but on December 9, 2020, MDPA declined criminal prosecution due to (b) (6), (b) (7) disclosures to PSU regarding (b) (6), (b) (7) foreign affiliations. The matter was then referred to the Civil Division, Eastern District of Pennsylvania. The investigation identified approximately \$75,000 in unallowable costs related to domestic and foreign labor, domestic and foreign travel, conference fees, and laboratory supplies.

(b) (5)

In March of 2023, the matter was reassigned to the Reporting Agent due to a potential conflict of interest with PSU. Investigative findings were presented to NASA's Acquisition Integrity Program for potential administrative remedies. On October 19, 2023, AIP declined to pursue. As such, this matter is closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), NJPOD
DISTR: File

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O-RM-21-0013-S

October 2, 2023

PROACTIVE PROJECT: UNDISCLOSED FOREIGN GIFTS OR CONTRACTS BY UNIVERSITIES

CASE CLOSING: This proactive initiative was initiated in October of 2020 based on a similar joint proactive initiative between NASA OIG and the National Science Foundation (NSF), OIG involving Section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA). This initiative focused on universities within the Rocky Mountain Post of Duty (RMPOD) area of responsibility (AOR) that might have violated Section 117 of the HEA, which requires the reporting of foreign funding by universities over \$250,000 in one year. The proactive then compared this data to determine if the universities were subsequently non-compliant with NASA procurement requirements regarding disclosure of all sources of funding by foreign entities.

In February 2019, the Department of Education (DoED) disclosed that they had opened six (6) compliance investigations at higher education institutions regarding disclosure of foreign gifts and found numerous issues, including that “The six investigated universities collectively failed to report in excess of \$1.3 billion from foreign sources over the past seven years despite their clear legal duty to do so under Section 117.” The DoED did not provide any additional information on which universities were included or the status and findings since they were still ongoing investigations.

The RA obtained a DoED-compiled Foreign Gifts and Contracts Report spreadsheet. A review of the information revealed numerous foreign gifts to universities in the RMPOD AOR. The RA performed a sample analysis on five universities which received the highest amounts of funds from NASA in the AOR. The RA coordinated with the NASA OIG Office of Counsel to serve Administrative Request Letters (ARL) detailing specific information on Foreign Gifts / Contracts from those five universities:

- University of Colorado (CU)
- Colorado State University (CSU)
- University of Utah (U of U)
- Brigham Young University (BYU)
- Boise State University (BSU)

The ARLs issued identified 77 grants that fell within the sampling range of the top five PIs¹ at each university. Between October 2021 – May 2022, the RA issued the ARLs to the respective

¹ The top five PIs selected was based on highest dollar amount in grants over the period in review according to NASA data.

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universities which subsequently provided responses to the interrogatories. The RA analyzed the responses and identified 12 grants that required further analysis based off responses. The RA reviewed the solicitation, proposals and budget records for potential discrepancies related to the universities' responses. The review of data primarily focused on foreign students and PI's travel costs and PI's Current and Pending Support. The RA's analysis did not disclose any information that was indicative of a false claim or other fraud. The RA, with support from Forensic Accountant (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), conducted a review of NASA's Payment Management System (PMS) Disbursement Transaction for the identified grants. The review did not disclose any credits that were issued by the universities for the associated grants. This review was conducted to identify any potential inappropriate charges that could have been uncovered by the universities, after receiving the ARLs and conducting a level of costs scrutiny requiring a refund to NASA.

The RA has no pending action on this initiative and recommends closing.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), RMPOD
DISTR: File

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O-LB-21-0016-S

February 28, 2023

PROACTIVE PROJECT: UNDISCLOSED FOREIGN GIFTS OR CONTRACTS BY UNIVERSITIES

CASE CLOSING: This proactive initiative was initiated in October of 2020 based on a similar joint proactive initiative between NASA OIG and the National Science Foundation (NSF), OIG involving Section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA). This initiative focused on universities within the Long Beach Resident Agency (LBRA) area of responsibility (AOR) that might have violated Section 117 of the HEA, which requires the reporting of foreign funding by universities over \$250,000 in one year. The proactive then compared this data to determine if the universities were subsequently non-compliant with NASA procurement requirements regarding disclosure of all sources of funding by foreign entities.

In February 2019, the Department of Education (DoED) disclosed that they had opened six (6) compliance investigations at higher education institutions regarding disclosure of foreign gifts and found numerous issues, including that “The six investigated universities collectively failed to report in excess of \$1.3 billion from foreign sources over the past seven years despite their clear legal duty to do so under Section 117.” The DoED did not provide any additional information on which universities were included or the status and findings since they were still ongoing investigations.

The RA obtained a DoED-compiled Foreign Gifts and Contracts Report spreadsheet. A review of the information revealed numerous foreign gifts to universities in the LBRA AOR. The RA performed a sample analysis on five universities which received the highest amounts of funds from NASA in the LBRA AOR. The RA coordinated with the NASA OIG Office of Counsel to serve Administrative Request Letters detailing specific information on Foreign Gifts / Contracts from those five universities:

- University of Hawaii (UoH)
- University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)
- University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB)
- University of California San Diego (UCSD)
- University of Arizona (UoA)

In October 2021, the RA coordinated with NSSC Contracting Officers concerning restrictions on the use of NASA funds and the initial results reported by the universities. No significant issues were noted.

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In January 2022, the RA provided a Supplemental Request letter to UCLA to obtain additional information on their previous disclosures which also did not show any significant issues.

A review of the case file showed that UCSD was requested to provide additional information on the employment of Chinese Nationals in September 2021 but had failed to do so. UCSD was notified and provided the follow-up information in October 2022. A review of the information indicated that UCSD had discovered a Chinese National researcher was funded from a NASA contract. UCSD claimed that a credit was issued back to NASA.

The RA coordinated with the NSSC to determine if NASA received the credits that were issued by UCSD. In February 2023, the RA received confirmation from the NSSC that they concurred with the \$46,123.75 credit that was applied by UCSD to the NASA contract. The RA entered the amount as a Cost Recovery in NORS.

(b) (5)

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), LBRA
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O-AR-21-0022-S

April 17, 2024

STANFORD UNIVERSITY UNREPORTED FOREIGN GIFTS

450 Jane Stanford Way
Stanford, CA 94305

CASE CLOSING: This investigation initiated as a joint proactive project with National Science Foundation (NSF) Office of Inspector General's (OIG) involving Section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA). This project was initiated to determine if U.S. Universities that were identified as non-compliant during a U.S. Department of Education (DoED) investigation are compliant with NASA and other Federal funding agencies' ¹ requirements regarding disclosure of all sources of funding in proposals to the U.S. Government.

Background

Section 117 of the HEA, as amended, provides that "institutions of higher education must file a disclosure report whenever any institution is owned or controlled by a foreign source or receives a gift from or enters into a contract with a foreign source, the value of which is \$250,000 or more, considered alone or in combination with all other gifts from or contracts with that foreign source within a calendar year."

NSF issued an OIG subpoena to Stanford requesting foreign gifts, contracts, awards, grants, and or other financial contributions that meet the reporting requirements of Section 117 of the HEA from January 1, 2015, through present (July 31, 2020-date of the subpoena). Multiple productions were received from Stanford and the Principal Investigator's (PI's) identified as receiving foreign gifts/contracts/awards. Over 800 PI's were identified as receiving foreign gifts/contracts/awards at Stanford. From the list of over 800 PI's, the NASA investigative team identified 42 awards and 20 PI's related to NASA Grants.

The Grant files were requested, reviewed, and analyzed to determine if any foreign awards were applicable to the NASA proposal reporting requirements. The analysis resulted in one PI, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), regarding two NASA grants, where foreign funding was not disclosed on the proposal.

¹ This joint proactive project included the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, Air Force Office of Special Investigations, Commerce OIG, Defense Criminal Investigative Service, National Institute of Health OIG, Department of Energy OIG, and the U.S. Attorney's Office of Baltimore (Civil) and Greenbelt (Criminal) Maryland.

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Stanford, despite requirements to do so, failed to disclose to Army, Navy, NASA, and NSF current and pending support from foreign sources for 12 Stanford faculty members who were PI or co-PIs on the federal research grant proposals.

Multiple presentations and negotiations were made before a settlement agreement was signed by all parties on September 29, 2023. Stanford agreed to a settlement amount of \$1,938,682 (b) (5) associated with the relevant PIs on 23 awards (b) (5) to resolve allegations they violated the False Claims Act by submitting proposals for federal research grants failing to disclose current and pending support. NASA recovered a total \$103,349.03 (b) (5). The recovery and award details are below:

PI	<u>Award</u>	(b) (5)
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)	80NSSC19M0203	(b) (5)
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)	80NSSC20K0258	(b) (4)
Total		(b) (5)

Based upon the settlement agreement, no additional investigative activity is warranted. Accordingly, it is recommended that this case be closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), ARC
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Office of Inspector General
Office of Investigations

O-AR-21-0023-S

January 12, 2023

NASA Protective Services (Ames)—Review of Prior Investigation

Ames Research Center
Moffett Field, CA 94035

CASE CLOSING: Case opening was predicated upon receipt of a letter of complaint that (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), a civilian, sent to the Office of the Vice President of the United States wherein (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) wrote that the NASA Office of Protective Services (OPS) had failed to conduct a proper investigation into an alleged assault that an OPS uniformed officer had committed against (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) on (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), at Ames Research Center. The letter was dated April 20, 2020.

On November 4, 2020, Reporting Agent (RA) and Resident Agent in Charge (RAC) (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) attempted to conduct a telephone interview with (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). Through the telephone conversation and through subsequent email messages, (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) informed RA that OPS had failed both to conduct an interview of (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and to request of (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) a copy of (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) cellphone video recording in the investigation that OPS had conducted over (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) complaint that an OPS uniformed officer had assaulted (b) (6), (b) (7) (C).

In a Management Referral Letter dated October 18, 2022, (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), addressed (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) wrote, in summary, that the Office of

Investigations is neither revisiting OPS reviews of the incident nor rendering any opinion about (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) allegations of assault. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) recommended that if OPS has not already reviewed the video recording from (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) cellphone that OPS consider such a review and consider conducting an interview of (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) (b) (6), (b) (7) (C).

In a letter of response dated December 14, 2022, (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) described the internal reviews that OPS had conducted of the incident and the assessment that the video recording supplied by (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) itself further supported the initial finding that the officer had acted professionally, within policies and had committed no assault. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) concluded that no interview of (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) was necessary.

This case is closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), NASA OIG, Ames Research Center
DISTR: File

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Office of Inspector General
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C-MA-21-0198-O

January 19, 2023

Subject Unknown: Compromise of NASA IPTV Network Computers
Marshall Space Flight Center
Huntsville, AL 35812

CASE CLOSING: On July 28, 2021, the NASA Office of Inspector General was notified that two NASA servers at the Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC) were accessed without authorization by an unknown host (b) (7)(E). The hostile host, an Internet Protocol (IP) address (b) (7)(E) registered to (b) (7)(E) in China, caused the compromised NASA servers to download, install, and run malicious software (b) (7)(E). The NASA hosts were compromised and (b) (7)(E) on or about (b) (7)(E). The investigation did not reveal an owner or user account associated with the (b) (7)(E).

which was hard-coded into the malware on the compromised NASA hosts.

A root cause analysis revealed the NASA servers experienced external vulnerability scanning by multiple hosts. The offending IP address (b) (7)(E)

Malware analysis suggests the malware is related to (b) (7)(E)

A digital forensics exam of the NASA hosts and malware analysis of the (b) (7)(E) found on the compromised hosts matched malware identified as crypto mining and remote access malware.

NASA OIG shared findings with partner law enforcement agencies to identify potential victims and related hostile hosts. The crypto mining servers registered to IP addresses on the subnet (b) (7)(E), registered to (b) (7)(E) and located in Roseau, Dominica, appeared to be recurrent. These commonalities did not appear to generate leads that revealed positive attribution such as identities, IP addresses, hosts, or user accounts.

NASA quantified its damages for incident response as 76 hours and \$7,600. Additional costs for downtime, system replacement, restoration, and other incurred costs were not determined nor included.

(b) (5)

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There are no other open leads and the evidence collected in this case has received approval for proper disposal (Attachment 1).

Based on the findings described above, the case is recommended for closing. The case may be referenced for future use should investigative leads develop.

Attachment(s)

1. Evidence Disposition Approval

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
DISTR: File

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Office of Inspector General
Office of Investigations

C-MA-22-0072-P

January 19, 2022

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

CASE CLOSING: In (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), the Internet Crimes against children (ICAC) taskforce served a search warrant at the home residence of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) at the Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC), for potential possession and distribution of child sexual abuse material (CSAM), including child pornography as defined by 18 USC § 2246. The ICAC search warrant was predicated by a cyber tip from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) alleging (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) SnapChat account uploaded and sent a file that appears to depict child pornography. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) obtained Counsel and provided written consent to search all seized devices.

The NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG), Cyber Crimes Division (CCD) initiated a preliminary investigation and supported the local ICAC office by conducting the digital forensic examinations of the devices seized. The forensic examination did not identify CSAM material or child pornography as defined by 18 USC § 2246 on the devices.

The investigation revealed that an iPhone seized from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) residence contained voicemails and text messages suggesting that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) became aware that a law enforcement official wished to speak to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). The information suggested that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) learned the nature of the inquiry was related to potential CSAM material per a text message. In the exchange, a party to the communications stated the law enforcement officer that attempted to contact (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) works with the division that investigates allegations of child sexual abuse.

Digital forensic analysis of the iPhone seized from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) residence indicated the iPhone was reset and restored after law enforcement's initial attempt to contact (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). A subpoena production from SnapChat revealed the user account in the cyber tip was registered by an email address, phone number, and Internet Protocol (IP) address as associated with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and deactivated after law enforcement's attempt to contact (b) (6), (b) (7)(C).

(b) (5), (b) (7)(E)

A subject interview was not conducted by locals, as (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was represented by Counsel.

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(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) logical and physical access was initially suspended in NASA's Identity and Access Management system (IdMAX). On (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) status was pending termination and offboarding in IdMax.

The status of this case and the findings pertaining to the allegations have been shared with the Physical Security Office (PSO) at MSFC.

There are no open Leads in this case and all evidence has received proper disposition approval (Attachment 1). Based on the facts described above, the case is recommended for closing. The case may be referenced should investigative leads develop.

Attachment(s)

1. Evidence Disposition Approval

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), MSFC
DISTR: File

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Office of Inspector General
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O-JS-22-0108-S

March 9, 2023

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) – MISHANDLING OF CLASSIFIED DATA

Johnson Space Center
Houston, TX 77058

CASE CLOSING: The OIG initiated this case based upon allegations received by Johnson Space Center's (JSC) Human Resources and Employee & Labor Relations Office regarding a potential mishandling of classified information by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), email (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)@nasa.gov, phone (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) has been a NASA civil servant (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and holds a national security clearance. The allegations stem from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) superiors becoming concerned with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) work performance being below expectations. When (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) supervisors would ask (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) to demonstrate what (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was working on over the last year, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) would respond that it was classified, thus, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) supervisors were unable to substantiate (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) work effort.

Coordination with NASA Security revealed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) logged into the Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF) approximately 14.25 hours during the period of April 2021 – December 2021. According to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) supervisors, the remainder of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) time would have been hours teleworking.

The OIG performed an analysis of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) timesheets for the period of January 2021 – January 2022. The analysis revealed most of the (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) time was spent in a telework status. Of the 31 pay periods reviewed, totaling 2,480 possible hours worked, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) logged 89.5 hours of regular onsite work. This equates to approximately 3.6% of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) time. Although it is not necessary for (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) to be in the SCIF to log regular onsite work, it revealed at least 96.4% of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) working hours were not in a secure location.

On April 07, 2022, the OIG interviewed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) regarding the allegations against (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) confirmed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was teleworking for most of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) time during 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there were times when (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) would have to come onsite to perform work regarding sensitive information. When asked if (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) worked on classified information while teleworking or in (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) office, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) affirmed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) never worked on classified information in an unclassified environment. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) clarified the SCIF was the classified environment (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) referenced. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated there was not a way to perform the sensitive work on (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) NASA issued computer. When asked how often (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) worked on classified information, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) attended weekly meetings that had to be in the SCIF. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) further stated (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) would not come into the office unless (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) had to listen to something in the SCIF. In addition, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) confirmed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) completed training regarding classified information every year to maintain (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) security clearance.

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At the conclusion of the interview, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) turned over (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) NASA issued laptop to the OIG, and it was immediately transferred to the Special Security Office (SSO) to initiate a review of its contents. The SSO transported the laptop to the Headquarters (HQ) Office of Protective Services (OPS) via a secure courier to be analyzed.

The OIG received notification from the JSC Human Resources Office that on April 28, 2022, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was issued a written reprimand for leave issues, and on June 7, 2022, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was issued a Notice of Proposed Removal for performance. However, effective (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) before a removal decision was issued.

On December 14, 2022, the OIG received a Digital Evidence Forensic Report from HQ OPS that concluded no classified documents were contained on (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) NASA issued computer.

Based on the information above this investigation will be closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), JSC
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Office of Inspector General
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O-GO-22-0140-HL-S

July 20, 2023

**ALLEGED PROCUREMENT INTEGRITY VIOLATION – OFFICE OF
PROCUREMENT**

Goddard Space Flight Center
Greenbelt, MD

CASE CLOSING: Investigation initiated from a hotline complaint from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Advanced Technology Applications, LLC (ATA), regarding the possible unauthorized exchange of proprietary information to competitor, Crown Consulting, Inc. (Crown), during an SBIR Phase I Kick-off Meeting, which (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) alleged resulted in Crown winning an SBIR Phase II award.¹

Investigation revealed that the SBIR Phase I Technical Monitor from NASA Langley Research Center (LaRC), forwarded ATA's virtual kickoff meeting to all subscribers from the email group "(b) (7)(E) .nasa.gov." Among the approximately 129 subscribers, consisting of both NASA civil servants and contractors, was a subcontractor from Crown. The subcontractor from Crown forwarded the invitation to Crown managers who attended ATA's Phase I kickoff meeting. ATA recognized their participation but did not comment on their attendance since it was their first experience working with NASA. ATA presented slides related to their project, all of which were clearly marked as "ATA, LLC Proprietary and Confidential".

After ATA applied for and was denied an SBIR Phase II award, ATA notified the OIG that Crown's SBIR Phase II proposal was awarded. ATA believed Crown may have leveraged ATA's proprietary information on the slides that were presented at their SBIR Phase I Kickoff meeting.

Investigation determined that the process of inviting subscribers from "(b) (7)(E) .nasa.gov" was a normal procedure among Technical Monitors and intended to foster collaboration among researchers. Further, the Technical Monitor did not benefit from extending the invitation to Crown or know the identities of the subscribers to the email list.

In response to the OIG's referral dated June 14, 2023, the NASA SBIR/STTR Program Management Office will implement a program to inform firms of what to expect during their

¹ (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) initial complaint to the OIG was that the NASA ombudsman would not respond to (b) (6), meeting requests to report Crown for usurping ATA's SBIR ideas. The investigation revealed that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was sending (b) (6), meeting requests to the wrong email address.

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period of performance and advise firms how to protect their information, including controlling attendance at meetings. Additionally, Phase I Technical Monitors and Phase II Contracting Officer Representatives will receive SBIR/STTR-specific training and guidance materials. Additionally, the Technical Monitor Delegation form will add language to prevent the disclosure of sensitive information and remind the company and the Technical Monitor of their responsibilities to mitigate risks.

The NASA Office of General Counsel, LaRC, briefed the Branch Head of the LaRC employee who invited the potential competitor to the meeting at which ATA disclosed proprietary information, concerning the OIG's determination that the employee failed to exercise necessary caution and due diligence. The Branch Head will ensure that the employee and others understand the importance of controlling access to meetings at which proprietary information may be discussed. Based on the employee's otherwise exemplary performance of duties, the Branch Head does not anticipate taking adverse or other additional administrative action on the employee.

Due to aforementioned no further investigative activity is anticipated. The matter is closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), GSFC
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O-ST-22-0180-S

October 20, 2023

PROACTIVE CASE: FINCEN WORKING GROUP
New Orleans, LA 70130

CASE CLOSING: The purpose of this proactive effort was to document our involvement and support of the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) working group established by the United States Attorney's Office (USAO), Eastern District of Louisiana (EDLA), New Orleans, LA (NOLA). The FinCEN working group included members from Department of Defense (DoD), Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the United States Secret Service (USSS), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG), amongst many others. Additionally, efforts were made to determine whether individuals associated with the group's work product were affiliated with NASA.

We participated in the FinCEN working group's meetings and conducted comparative analysis of the group's work product and information contained within NASA databases; however, we did not we did not identify any NASA affiliations that warranted additional investigation.

We anticipate continued participation with the FinCEN working group and those efforts will be documented within the NASA OIG NORs system.

Based on the above information, no further investigative steps are warranted. Case closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Special Agent/SSC
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Office of Inspector General
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O-JS-22-0190-HL-P

February 1, 2023

POTENTIAL EXPORT CONTROL VIOLATIONS – ORION PROGRAM

Kennedy Space Center
Kennedy Space Center, FL 32899

CASE CLOSING: This case was initiated based on a hotline complaint voicing concerns over potential export control violations. The complainant alleged (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), a dual (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) citizen, through (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) Stem Rad, Ltd., based in (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), collaborated with Lockheed Martin Advanced Development Programs to develop a radiation shielding vest for the Israeli Space Agency (ISA) to be tested onboard Artemis I. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) StemRad, Inc., based in Tampa, Florida. During the payload processing prior to the launch, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) reportedly photographed both of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) passports resting on the mannequin wearing the radiation shielding vest as proof to ISA that the integration work had been completed. The complainant explained there were also concerns that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) did not disclose (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) dual citizenship for the badging process to obtain access to Kennedy Space Center (KSC) for the Artemis I launch.

Agents from NASA OIG and Department of Commerce, Office of Export Enforcement, Bureau of Industry and Security interviewed the payload integration specialist and Orion Program Export Control Representative and learned that according to NASA Procedural Requirements (NPR) 1600.4A, Chapter 4, paragraph 4.8.1.1, anyone with dual citizenship is to be treated and badged as a US citizen, and therefore, it was proper to badge (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) as a US citizen for access to KSC.

Additionally, Stem Rad was not working in conjunction with Lockheed Martin to develop the radiation shielding vest. The confusion occurred because Stem Rad had worked with Lockheed Martin in the past on a separate project, and Lockheed Martin made the request to NASA for (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) badge for the launch associated with this project. However, Stem Rad was contracted by the German Space Agency, Deutsches Zentrum Fur Luft- und Raumfahrt (DLR) to develop the radiation shielding vests. Once the vest was completed, Stem Rad shipped the vest to the DLR, and the DLR shipped the vest to KSC. NASA had no contact with Stem Rad and was unaware of their involvement in the creation of the radiation shielding vest. There was no export control violation.

Since there was no violation of NASA policy or export control violation, this case is closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), JSC
DISTR: File

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Office of Inspector General
Office of Investigations

O-LB-22-0202-HL-P

February 10, 2023

**SUSPECTED PLAGIARISM IN (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) HISTORY PUBLICATION
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)**

CASE CLOSING: On August 31, 2022, the NASA Office of Inspector General received an email from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, about alleged plagiarism in a NASA publication from a possible whistleblower. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) reported (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) alleged plagiarism in the (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) which covered (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) history and was authored by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) shared documentation (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) office received from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), including a summary of the overall allegations, communication with NASA about the allegations, proposed corrections, documentation of the plagiarism claims, and some original sources of the alleged plagiarism.

NASA OIG Associate Counsel (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) concluded (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) did not qualify as a protected whistleblower. A review of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) Summary of Complaint found (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) claimed to have started working as (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) for NASA in (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) writing books, video scripts, and other material for various NASA Centers. According to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), this included writing two (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) titled (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), while (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) claimed that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) plagiarized (b) (6), (b) (7)(C).

In (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) referral to NASA OIG, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) posed the following questions (italicized):

1. *Is there plagiarism present in the (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) ? If present, does that violate NASA regulations or Federal law?*

NASA OIG investigative findings: In coordination with Associate Counsel (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) this investigation revealed no findings of plagiarism or violations of NASA regulations or federal law.

2. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) is (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) at the (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and has been responsible for numerous publications over the years. Is there evidence of plagiarism in (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) other work?

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NASA OIG investigative findings: In coordination with Associate Counsel (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) as the originating plagiarism claims for the (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) were determined to be unfounded, no publications outside of the (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) were reviewed.

3. Did (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) through which (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) take appropriate steps to prevent misconduct and, upon being alerted to potential misconduct, follow appropriate policies for investigating allegations of misconduct?

NASA OIG investigative findings: (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) is a (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and works as (b)(6), (b)(7)(C). When (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) received a letter from (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) attorney alleging research misconduct against (b)(6), (b)(7)(C), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) reviewed the matter with (b)(6), (b)(7)(C), and worked with (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) to address the concerns via written response. Associate Counsel (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) found (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) responses to be appropriate and timely.

4. Did the NASA staff informed of potential plagiarism by the whistleblower respond appropriately and in accordance with applicable policies and regulations?

NASA OIG investigative findings: NASA OIG reviewed relevant policies, regulations, contracts, records, and coordinated interviews with (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) civil servant and contract personnel. Associate Counsel (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) found NASA's responses to be appropriate and timely.

Associate Counsel (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) determined the response to (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) inquiry would be provided by the NASA OIG Office of Counsel. Pending receipt of further information, this investigation is closed.

Prepared by: (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

DISTR: File

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C-WA-24-0023-P

October 3, 2024

UNAUTHORIZED USE OF NASA SYSTEMS (BITCOIN MINING)
Wallops Flight Facility

CASE CLOSING: In October 2023, the Reporting Agent (RA) of the NASA Office of Investigations (OI) Cyber Crimes Division (CCD) initiated an investigation from a referral received from Criminal and Cyber Threat Intelligence (CaCTI) unit. CaCTI's report referred to allegations by the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) concerning the potential unauthorized use of a NASA system for bitcoin mining.

The RA spoke with Special Agent (SA) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) of USPIS and was informed that during the course of a forensic exam (related to a separate USPIS investigation of subject (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)), (b) (7)(E) . That IP was linked to a government computer system at NASA Wallops Flight Facility (WFF) in Wattsville, VA, leading to suspicions that the system was potentially being used as part of a bitcoin mining operation.

The RA contacted the NASA Security Operations Center (SOC) in reference to the IP address and requested the SOC research any possible related abuses of NASA IT infrastructure. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), SOC Cybersecurity Watch Officer was assigned to this request and issued SOC Incident Management System (IMS) ticket number SWI-20240731-1495791. The SOC investigation included searches across multiple systems and contact with the NASA network engineering team. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) confirmed the IP address was part of a "reserved" block of public IP addresses owned by NASA but there was no indication the IP address was in use anywhere at NASA.

Between January 2024 and July 2024, the RA and Assistant Special Agent in Charge (ASAC) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) attempted to make contact with USPIS SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) to request additional information or evidence pertaining to the allegations of the Bitcoin mining operation. However, as of the date of this report, NASA OIG CCD has received no response from SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) or USPIS.

Based on the facts described above and no evidence of criminal activity related to NASA, this case is recommended for closure.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
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O-KE-24-0064-Z

December 21, 2023

ALLEGED SPACE VEHICLE DEBRIS

Kennedy Space Center, Florida

CASE CLOSING: On November 28, 2023, the Reporting Agent (RA) received a telephone call from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), telephone number (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) informed the RA that approximately two years ago, at the location of Berkley Street, in Satellite Beach, FL, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) located what (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) believed to be a piece of space vehicle debris (artifact). The artifact appeared to have washed up from the ocean near the end of Berkley Street. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) followed up the telephone call with an email from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) @hotmail.com (Attachment 1), that contained five photographs of the artifact.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) relayed that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) notified NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG), Kennedy Space Center (KSC) Resident Agency (RA), to determine if the artifact could be identified as property of NASA, and if so, if (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) could retain custody of the artifact, or was to return it. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) provided that the artifact measured approximately 18" long, 18" wide, and 2" thick, appeared to be made of carbon fiber reinforced phenolic, with a honeycomb metal core. The artifact also contained numerous barnacles.

The RA subsequently forwarded the photographs (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) provided to the SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), NASA OIG Headquarters Program Manager (PM), who holds regular meetings with and as part of NASA's Artifact Working Group (WG), for coordination and research into the item. At the writing of this report, the Artifact WG consisted of the following members:

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)	@nasa.gov
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)	@nasa.gov
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)	@nasa.gov
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)	@nasa.gov
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)	@nasa.gov
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)	@nasa.gov
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)	@nasa.gov
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)	@nasa.gov
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)	@nasa.gov

The Artifact WG provided the information and photographs to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) for NASA's Apollo, Challenger, Columbia Lessons Learned Program (ACCLLP),

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Office of Safety and Mission Assurance, National Aeronautics and Space Administration,
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)@nasa.gov, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C).

On December 8, 2023, PM (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) provided the Artifact WG, along with the RA and other OIG personnel, the following results (**Attachment 2**), in part, concerning the review of the artifact:

“After a thorough analysis of the photographs, I can conclusively state this is not an item from Challenger. To give it an exact identification is very difficult, but the most likely leading contender is from an expendable launch vehicle payload faring section. Again, nothing to do with NASA property.”

On December 21, 2023, the RA contacted (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and informed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) the artifact (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) provided photographs of was determined most likely be a piece of an expendable launch vehicle payload faring section, and it was not considered NASA property. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) thanked the RA for (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) diligence and time spent tracking down the information.

Attachments:

1. November 28, 2023 (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) Email
2. December 8, 2023 (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) Email

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), KSC
DISTR: File

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O-LA-24-0115-S

June 11, 2024

DATA BACKUP COMPROMISE – NEST CONTRACT

Langley Research Center
Hampton, VA 23681

CASE CLOSING: Investigation predicated upon information received from the Office of General Counsel (OGC), Langley Research Center (LaRC), who relayed allegations made by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), LaRC, concerning data backup issues related to the NASA End-User Services & Technologies (NEST) contract awarded to Leidos, Inc. (LEIDOS).

Interviews of NASA contracting personnel confirmed LEIDOS is meeting their contractual obligations regarding computer backup requirements.

Investigation disclosed LEIDOS provides specific directions on what is automatically backed up and how to back up other data. The end-user was using a secondary drive to store (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) data, which was not automatically backed up. The end-user failed to inform the NEST technician of this during (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) computer refresh, which resulted in the secondary drive not being backed up.

No criminal, civil, or administrative actions are anticipated. Accordingly, this matter is closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), LaRC
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O-JS-24-0119-Z

March 8, 2024

REQUEST FOR DOCUMENTATION RELATED TO DECEASED ASTRONAUT

Johnson Space Center
Houston, TX 77058

CASE CLOSING: On March 5, 2024, the Reporting Agent (RA) returned a telephone contact from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) @yahoo.com. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated (b) (6) was formerly a Navy service member and while in the Navy, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) alleged that former Astronaut (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) operated on (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (Agent's Note: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)) However, at the time of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) medical procedures, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was in the Navy and not an Astronaut. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) claimed that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was not licensed at that time as a doctor and that Naval records did not disclose these medical procedures, one of which (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) described as suture removal. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was attempting to verify these medical procedures because (b) (6) needed documentation for ongoing benefits claims. The RA informed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) complaint was not within the purview and jurisdiction of the NASA Office of Inspector General. At (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) request for written response to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) complaint, the RA sent (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) an email dated March 8, 2024 (Attachment).

This case is closed.

Attachment:

Email, dated March 8, 2024

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) . JSC
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O-KE-24-0128-S

April 4, 2024

ALLEGED SPACE DEBRIS REENTRY

Kennedy Space Center, FL

CASE CLOSING: On March 19, 2024, the NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG), Kennedy Space Center (KSC) Resident Agency, was alerted by NASA KSC Legal to an alleged piece of space debris (artifact) falling onto a residence in Naples, FL. The incident received press coverage and reportedly occurred on March 8, 2024; the same day other known debris was known to have entered the earth's atmosphere, of which had previously been released from the International Space Station (ISS). The artifact crashed through the homeowner's roof all the way through the subfloor of the residence.

The RA coordinated this matter with KSC Legal and with the ISS Program Office. Additionally, the RA coordinated with ISS Program Manager (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), concerning the NASA OIG's ability to support recovery of the artifact, in conjunction with the Collier County Sheriff's Office (CCSO).

NASA tentatively identified the part as a NASA-built component (battery/mount) of a Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) portion of the spacecraft; however, this still requires further examination. This matter has been briefed to Associate Administrator Free and Johnson Space Center Director Wyche; both were included in the referenced email communication.

NASA requested assistance from NASA OIG in recovering the artifact. Coordination was completed with the CCSO, which responded to the damaged home and completed an incident report.

CCSO identified the homeowner as (b) (6), (b) (7)(C); DOB: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C); email: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)@gmail.com; phone: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) resided at (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Naples, Florida, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C).

An administrative case was opened to monitor and support NASA's efforts in recovering the identified artifact.

On March 28, 2024, the RA traveled to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Naples, Florida, and met with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), the owner of the residence. Detective (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Collier County Sheriff's Office, and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Engineering Systems, Inc. (ESI), were also present.

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The RA took possession of the artifact from ^{(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)} and transported it to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C),
 (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) Exploration Research and Technology Programs, Space Station Processing Facility
 (SSPF), KSC, for testing/analysis.

^{(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)} executed NASA OIG Evidence Custody Document (ECD) for receipt of the artifact. The
 artifact was “Disposed to NASA for testing/analysis.”

The effort to support NASA’s efforts in recovering the identified artifact has been completed.

This investigation is closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) , KSC
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O-MA-24-0142-HL-S

May 23, 2024

MISUSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY NASA EMPLOYEE

Marshall Space Flight Center
Huntsville, AL 35812

CASE CLOSING: This investigation was predicated on information received by an anonymous submission to the NASA OIG Hotline, wherein it was alleged (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Spacecraft & Vehicle Systems Department, Code EV42, Marshall Space Flight Center, (MSFC), inappropriately used (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) affiliation with NASA on the X (formerly Twitter) platform. Further, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) frequently used strong insults when discussing technical details of the Artemis program, openly criticized a NASA contractor, and boasted of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) access to insider information.

We requested the NASA OIG CaCTI conduct open source and social media analysis of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) with respect to the allegations. Due to time sensitivity and the operational prioritization of CaCTI, the request was not fulfilled before the closing of this case.

We attempted to coordinate with the NASA OIG Hotline complainant and received the following message, "The email account that you tried to reach is inactive".

We coordinated with Special Agent (SA) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and Investigator (INV) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Protective Services Office, MSFC, and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Employee Relations, Office of Human Capital, MSFC and briefed them on the status and scope of this investigation. SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) INV (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) reviewed the files of their office and determined there was no reporting on (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

We coordinated with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Spacecraft and Vehicle Systems, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) MSFC, and briefed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) on the status and scope of this investigation. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) related (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was the (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) for (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and was unaware of the allegations.

We conducted an audio and video recorded Microsoft Teams interview of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was provided a Garrity Warning which (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) digitally signed and agreed to the voluntary interview. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) invoked (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) Weingarten rights and requested (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), President, Marshall Engineers, and Scientists Association, IFPTE, Local 27, AFL-CIO & CLC, MSFC, who attended the interview.

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(b) (6), (b) (7) was asked about any allegations (b) (6), (b) (7) had concerning NASA contractors. (b) (6), (b) (7) provided technical safety details of events that were mentioned in open source reporting but felt they did not receive the proper attention by NASA or the space industry. (b) (6), (b) (7) was provided the link to the MSFC Reporting Safety Concerns and NASA Safety Reporting System websites and was encouraged to report (b) (6), (b) (7) safety concerns.

(b) (6), (b) (7) stated (b) (6), (b) (7) had engaged in conversations regarding Space X on the social media platform, X; however, (b) (6), (b) (7) maintained a caveat on (b) (6), (b) (7) profile which stated (b) (6), (b) (7) comments were (b) (6), (b) (7) opinion and were not reflective of NASA. (b) (6), (b) (7) further stated (b) (6), (b) (7) discussions on X were only about information (b) (6), (b) (7) obtained through open-source reporting and not what (b) (6), (b) (7) learned through (b) (6), (b) (7) employment at NASA. (b) (6), (b) (7) stated there were several X profiles that were stalking and harassing (b) (6), (b) (7) for (b) (6), (b) (7) comments regarding Space X.

We briefed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) on the results of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) interview. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) related that although (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) X profile caveated (b) (6), (b) (7) statements as (b) (6), (b) (7) personal views, (b) (6), (b) (7) was concerned with the “perception” of a NASA civil servant making statements against a NASA contractor. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) further related (b) (6), (b) (7) would inform (b) (6), (b) (7) of (b) (6), (b) (7) concerns and the NASA ethics policy regarding NASA civil servants.

This investigation is closed in the files of this office.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), MSFC
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O-JS-24-0148-Z

April 18, 2024

ALLEGED VIOLATION RELATED TO SPACE SUIT LOAN REQUEST BY SENATOR MARK KELLY

Johnson Space Center
Houston, TX 77058

CASE CLOSING: The OIG received an anonymous hotline complaint dated April 4, 2024 (Attachment 1) that in the fall of 2023, Senator Mark Kelly (Sen. Kelly) requested a spacesuit to display in his congressional office in violation of NASA policy (NPR 1387.1A), 1.6.1 h.3, which states, "... (4) When there is a Congressional request for a NASA exhibit, exhibits and artifacts may be loaned for events, but loans for personal offices are prohibited." It was further alleged that NASA decision makers in the Office of Communications agreed the agency would pay total costs of \$48,000 for transporting and assembling a custom display case. The complaint stated the head of the Agency Exhibits and Artifacts Program and the deputy chief of the Engagement Division both put in writing their objections to the decision.

On April 10, 2024, the OIG discussed this complaint with the JSC Deputy Chief Counsel, and it was disclosed that a Loan Exhibit Agreement (Attachment 2) was executed for a spacesuit display. Review of the agreement identified that the suit would be displayed in the public lobby and reception area of Sen. Kelly's Office suite located at the Hart Senate Office Building. The intended purpose was "...to collaborate on a unique museum-grade exhibition to capitalize on a portion of the 3,000,000 people who visit the Capitol each year and continue to the 1.2 million sq ft Senate's Hart building, the newest structure designed to serve the United States Senate, home to offices to 50 Senators and multiple committees and subcommittees. The work will inform the public about NASA's mission and history with the display of a historic NASA artifact and relevant graphic content." The JSC Deputy Chief Counsel further disclosed that since the proposed loan exhibit would be in a public space and not in Sen. Kelly's private office, the agreement was approved by the Office of General Counsel (OGC) as well as the JSC Director of Communications. Additional review of the agreement disclosed that NASA would pay \$18,574 for the labor, travel, and transportation fees associated with the installation of the exhibit, as well as provide a display case, mannequin, support stand, and graphic, with an estimated value of \$4,935.

Since the JSC Deputy Chief Counsel, the OGC as well as the JSC Director of communications approved the agreement, and because the display will be in a public area as opposed to a private office, no violation occurred. This case is closed.

Attachments:

1. Hotline complaint date April 4, 2024.
2. Loan Exhibit Agreement, no date

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) , JSC
DISTR: File

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O-GL-24-0180-P

October 4, 2024

ALLEGED ANTICOMPETITIVE CONDUCT – PRATT & WHITNEY

Glenn Research Center
Cleveland, OH 44135

CASE CLOSING: This NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigation was initiated after public news reports revealed a civil complaint filed against Pratt & Whitney Canada Corp., Pratt & Whitney Canada Holdings Corp., and P&WC Turbo Engines Corp. (collectively, Pratt) that alleged Pratt business practices prevented competitors from accessing used PT6 and PW100 turboprop engines and parts which are essential components in the aviation industry. Specifically, a supplier of aftermarket aircraft engines and parts claimed that Pratt violated U.S. fair market competition laws by blocking approved overhaul facilities from supplying parts and engines to other market players and thereby monopolized the market for used turboprop engines, specifically the PT6 and PW100. It was also alleged that Pratt purchased used parts and engines at non-economic prices to deny access to others.

Coordination with the Logistics Management Division, Headquarters, revealed PT6 and PW100 engines were used at Armstrong Flight Research Center (AFRC), Wallops Flight Facility (WFF), and Glenn Research Center (GRC).

The OIG obtained and reviewed relevant NASA maintenance records on the PT6 or PW100 engines. A review of the maintenance records provided by AFRC revealed that engine serial number PWV-58182 has not had maintenance other than minor inspections since 2001 and this was performed at AFRC. In addition, the two engines on aircraft N644NA and N842NA have not been touched since the aircraft arrived in 2015.

A review of the maintenance records provided by WFF revealed they did most of their own engine maintenance at WFF. If maintenance from outside companies was required, then WFF used Textron Aviation Incorporated, Vector Airspace, or Prime Turbines.

A review of the maintenance records provided by GRC revealed that outside companies that conducted maintenance on the engines were National Aerotech and/or Prime Turbines. All other maintenance was performed at GRC.

The OIG found no evidence that maintenance on PT6 or PW100 engines owned by NASA was performed by Pratt, and there were no reported concerns regarding the availability of spare parts.

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No additional investigative activities are warranted at this time. Accordingly, this matter is closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), GRC
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O-GL-24-0191-Z

June 18, 2024

ALLEGED WHISTLEBLOWER RETALIATION

Glenn Research Center
Cleveland, OH 44135

CASE INITIATION/CLOSING: On March 20, 2024, Acting Inspector General George Scott, NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG), received an e-mail from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate, Glenn Research Center (GRC), raising (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) concern that GRC management was beginning to retaliate against (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) for accusing (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) former supervisor, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), of abusive and improper behavior. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) also provided communications concerning a related grievance filed in (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) which included a statement that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) would be reporting (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) concerns to the OIG.

Associate Counsel to the Inspector General (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) provided (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) with a copy of the OIG Whistleblower Questionnaire (WBQ) and requested that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) complete and return it. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) subsequently returned a completed WBQ and then a review was conducted to include (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) EFO SAC (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), and the Reporting Agent (RA). The review of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) completed WBQ revealed self-described allegations of abuse of power/position, timesheet mischarging/fraud, dereliction of duty, hazardous and life-threatening work situation, age/medical discrimination, and retaliation. After review by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and the RA, it was determined that the appropriate authority to investigate violations of the Whistleblower Protection Act (WPA) alleged by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) due to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) employment status as a NASA civil servant.

The OIG review of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) WBQ also determined the disclosures made by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) that resulted in the WPA violation (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) alleged did not result from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) reporting information to or cooperating with the OIG, and it was determined the nature of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) disclosures to GRC management involving alleged administrative misconduct by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) supervisors did not warrant an independent investigation by the OIG.

On June 5, 2024, an e-mail response to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was sent to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) by the RA which summarized the above review and analysis, and a copy of the Notice of Rights with the OSC was also attached. The RA offered to formally refer (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) WBQ to OSC if (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) returned a signed copy of the Notice of Rights, but (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) has not responded as of the date of this report. Based on the above, no additional investigative activity is warranted at this time. Accordingly, this matter is closed.

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Attachments:

1. WBQ completed by ^{(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)} dated May 1, 2024
2. Response to ^{(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)} with OSC Notice of Rights, sent June 5, 2024

Prepared by: **(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)**, GRC
DISTR: File

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O-JS-24-0197-S

October 7, 2024

UNCLAIMED NASA PROPERTY

Johnson Space Center
Houston, TX 77058

CASE CLOSING: The OIG received a hotline complaint informing that the state of Texas unclaimed property website indicated that a \$60K overpayment belonging to NASA was reported in 2020 and remained unclaimed. The complainant stated they had reported this matter previously but did not identify to whom it was reported.

OIG review of the Texas unclaimed property website showed that \$60,588.84 belonging to NASA Johnson Space Center (JSC) was reported as unclaimed in 2020. The named holder was Celco (Cellco) Partnership, and the property was identified as a customer overpayment.

OIG discussions with the NASA JSC Chief Accountant disclosed awareness of the issue, and that prior unsuccessful attempts were made to substantiate the claim to recover the funds. Research performed by the Chief Accountant revealed Verizon Wireless was a doing business as (DBA) entity for Cellco; contacts with Verizon Wireless returned no additional or contractual information to ascertain the nature of the overpayment. However, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was identified as a potential point of contact. Ultimately, the Chief Accountant was unable to determine the amounts belonged to NASA and was not comfortable certifying to retrieve the funds.

The OIG interviewed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), a NASA contract employee with Leidos. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) informed that (b) (6) used to work for Lockheed Martin Information Technology (LMIT) on the NASA JSC Outsourcing Desktop Initiative for NASA (ODIN) contract. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) explained the unclaimed property related to an LMIT overpayment to Verizon Wireless for subcontracted cellular services provided to NASA under the ODIN contract approximately 12 years ago. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) argued that since the delivery order was firm fixed price, and final contract closeout had occurred, all financial matters concerning NASA under this closed-out contract were resolved; no further billing or claims are applicable. Therefore, the unclaimed property does not reflect any amount owed to NASA.

OIG attempts to verify with NASA procurement that no flexibly priced components to the ODIN contract were not definitive. An OIG review of the delivery order terms and conditions revealed the bulk of the agreement was firm fixed price; however, a minor element for actual cost reimbursement for international cellular service existed. The OIG was unable to identify any

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documentation that indicated the unclaimed amounts from Verizon Wireless related to international cellular service.

Since no documentation was identified that indicated NASA was entitled to a credit for the overpayment refund, this case is closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) , JSC
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O-HS-24-0226-HL

August 15, 2024

QUESTIONABLE SOLICITATION AND PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

NASA Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546

HOTLINE CASE INITIATION: On August 6, 2024, NASA OIG received a complaint that related reports from two anonymous individuals who both claim unfair practices, potential favoritism by the program officer, and conflict of interest involving two reviewers involved in the solicitation process that was conducted through Ideas Lab, a concept that is an alternative method to solicitations through NSPIRES. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), HQ NASA, conducted the solicitation in February 2024 through the Planetary Science Division (PSD) Research and Analysis (R&A) Program.

The complainants came to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Ames Research Center, who reported it to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), NASA Ethics (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), the Chief Scientists Office and the OIG. At this time, the OIG is going to Zero file this matter. If additional information is found or assistance is needed, OI will reopen the matter to assist.

Attachment:

1. Email Notification (6Aug24)

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), HQ NASA
DISTR: File

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O-KE-24-0241-P

September 4, 2024

ALLEGED PRODUCT SUBSTITUTION (STARLINER PARACHUTE CORD)
Kennedy Space Center, FL

CASE CLOSING: On August 26, 2024, the Reporting Agent (RA) became aware of an allegation made by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), NASA International Space Station (ISS) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), to the NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG), Western Field Office (WFO), related to possible product substitution of the Kevlar used to manufacture parachute cords for the Boeing Company Starliner.

On August 29, 2024, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was interviewed by NASA OIG agents. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was unaware of any safety issues at the time of the meeting but since became aware that the wrong material was used on the parachute cord on the Boeing Company Starliner. The Boeing Company subcontracted with Airborne Systems, 5800 North Magnolia Avenue, Pennsauken, NJ, to provide the parachute cord, and Airborne Systems subcontracted with a CSR Incorporated, 20130 Lakeview Center Plaza, Suite 400, Ashburn, VA 20147, to provide the material for the parachute cord. The Boeing Company ordered the parachute cord from Airborne Systems with the specification of Kevlar 29, which the Boeing Company proposed to NASA and received approval.

NASA learned after the Starliner was on the launchpad that a different material, Kevlar KM2 Plus, was used instead of Kevlar 29 for the Starliner parachute cord. However, since the changed parachute cord was the material used during testing, NASA decided it was safe to be used. NASA conducted additional parachute testing between Starliner's second and third launches.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) believed the parachute issue identified was a traceability issue and possibly unintentional. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated that when contractors propose to NASA which parachute cord to use, most contractors would specify low, medium, or high density of material to be used, and not to the specificity of whether Kevlar 29, Kevlar 129 or Kevlar KM2 Plus would be used. In this case, the Boeing Company specified that Kevlar 29 would be used when Kevlar 29 is the older material that very few companies still manufacture. Kevlar KM2 Plus was at least the same strength and density as Kevlar 29. Kevlar KM2 Plus, used in the current Starliner parachute cord, was a newer generation and better-quality Kevlar.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) discussed the parachute cord issue with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) NASA's Commercial Crew Program, who did not have any safety concerns about the substituted material. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) also suggested the agents speak with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), who could provide additional information on Starliner's parachute testing and development.

On September 9, 2024, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), NASA Commercial Crew Program, Johnson Space Center (JSC), was interviewed by NASA OIG agents. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was

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familiar with the Boeing Company Starliner's parachute testing and development, as well as the alleged substandard parachute cord issue.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) explained that the Boeing Company subcontracted with Airborne Systems to provide multiple complete parachute packages for Starliner. Airborne Systems subcontracted with CSR Incorporated, a designer, manufacturer, and distributor of braided cords and ropes. CSR Incorporated was one of only two manufacturers in the United States that provide the required braided Kevlar cord used in Aerospace applications; the other manufacturer was Bally Ribbons Mills, 23 North 7th Street, Bally, PA.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) described how the Boeing Company ordered the parachute cord from Airborne Systems with the specification of Kevlar 29, which the Boeing Company proposed to NASA and received approval. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) described the process of what was provided and was received by the Boeing Company from Airborne Systems regarding the parachute for Starliner.

NASA learned after the Starliner was on the launchpad that a different material, Kevlar KM2 Plus, was used instead of Kevlar 29 for the Starliner parachute cord. However, because the parachute cord of substituted material was the one used during testing, NASA decided it was safe to be used for Starliner missions. NASA conducted additional parachute testing between Starliner's second and third launches. There were additional testing and certifications conducted on the provided cord itself by CRS Incorporated, Airborne Systems, the Boeing Company, and NASA, none of which concluded a safety issue for Starliner.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated that what the Boeing Company/NASA received from Airborne Systems was technically different than what was originally agreed upon, however the material and process that was used for the parachute cord was a higher standard and quality than what was originally requested. NASA tested the parachute cords extensively and signed off on using the substituted material.

[Agent's note: Starliner completed a successful landing using the currently installed parachute cord on September 6, 2024, at White Sands, New Mexico.]

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) did not have any safety concerns with Starliner's parachute related to the substituted product. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) did not believe there was any intentional fraud committed by any of the sub-tier suppliers to the Boeing Company, only that there may have been some cut-and-paste mistakes on an older certification form CSR Incorporated provided to Airborne Systems, which in turn was forwarded to the Boeing Company/NASA within an Acceptance Data Package.

There was no loss to NASA related to the substitution of a higher quality product for the manufacturer of the Boeing Company Starliner parachute.

There were no safety issues identified for Commercial Crew or any Starliner mission related to the substitution of a higher quality product for the manufacturer of the Boeing Company Starliner parachute.

No criminal, civil, and/or administrative violations were identified.

This investigation is closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) , KSC
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Office of Inspector General
Office of Investigations

O-KE-23-0012-S

August 21, 2023

PROACTIVE PROJECT: FBI TASK FORCE ACTIVITY

Kennedy Space Center, FL

CASE CLOSING: This proactive was initiated in October 2022 after the NASA Office of Inspector General, Kennedy Space Center (KSC) Resident Agency, placed an investigator as a Task Force Officer (TFO) with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Brevard Resident Agency (BRA). The FBI – BRA Task Force Program included members from federal law enforcement agencies, to include but not limited to the Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, as well as local law enforcement agencies. The Task Force Program provided a mechanism for participating TFOs to liaise, network, and coordinate investigative efforts with one another.

The proactive was designed to examine the potential intersection of counterintelligence and fraud matters with a potential NASA nexus. A secondary emphasis of this proactive was the creation of a proactive initiative to deploy Investigative Response Teams (IRTs) during launches of special interest. The IRTs now support the NASA KSC Protective Services Office by providing a mechanism for the deployment of an immediate investigate response to situations when required.

During this proactive, the IRTs were activated for seven launches and will continue, as needed. Separate instances of investigative support provided or joint investigative work were also documented.

No spin-off investigations were initiated during this proactive.

This matter is now closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) , KSC
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O-ST-23-0023-S

July 25, 2023

PROACTIVE PROJECT: REVIEW OF HELIUM CONTRACTS WITHIN THE CFO AOR

Stennis Space Center, MS 39529

CASE CLOSING: We initiated this investigation as a proactive effort to review and identify potential fraud indicators within NASA contract 80KSC023DA125, the liquid/gaseous helium contract which is used a delivery vehicle to NASA centers with the NASA OIG Central Field Office (CFO) area of responsibility. The prime contractor for this contract was Messer, LLC. (Messer), Bridgewater, NJ. The contract was managed at Kennedy Space Center (KSC), FL with individual delivery orders for each NASA Center.

We reviewed the liquid/gaseous helium contract and identified at the time it was let, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managed Cliffside Refining Unit, the supplier of helium under the previous NASA contract with Messer, shutdown. This resulted in significant cost increases to NASA. The cost increases of helium were driven by such factors as meeting mission critical requirements, milestones, dependency on helium suppliers purchasing from the commercial markets, and spot buying of helium. As a result, the price for liquid helium for NASA Centers during this timeframe increased up to 1150% and the price for gaseous helium increased up to 1576%.

We coordinated with NASA contracting officers at KSC and at Stennis Space Center (SSC) for liquid/gaseous helium contracts. They conveyed their concerns regarding the price increase for liquid/gaseous helium and NASA's practice of allowing Messer to use their own weight scales to invoice NASA.

We determined that Messer used a DD Form 250, Material Inspection and Receiving Report (MIRR), for each truckload of gaseous helium delivered to NASA. The MIRR contained information such as temperature/pressure of truck at the time of loading, truck seal number, if applicable, and the specific chemical compound of the helium. As a means of verifying the amount of liquid/gaseous helium delivered to SSC, the propellant crew verified the information by (b) (7)(E) and (b) (7)(E)

Furthermore, we

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determined that audits of Messer's weight scales were periodically conducted by a NASA designated crew and that no anomalies have been reported.

We verified that NASA's contract with MESSER was competed and did not identify any apparent indicators of bid-rigging.

We coordinated with NASA Acquisition and Integrity Program (AIP) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) regarding the Buy American Act clause within NASA's contract with Messer and ascertained that NASA allowed Messer to deviate from it.

Based on the above information, all investigative leads have been exhausted and no further investigation is warranted. Case closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), SSC
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Office of Inspector General
Office of Investigations

O-GO-23-0056-S

May 23, 2023

WHISTLEBLOWER COMPLAINT-RETALIATION SPACECRAFT DECOMMISSION
Goddard Space Flight Center
Greenbelt, MD

CASE CLOSING: Investigation initiated upon notification to the NASA Inspector General Whistleblower Coordinator from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Peraton Corporation (Peraton), White Sands Complex (WSC), opposing the decommissioning of the Tracking and Data Relay Satellite 9¹ (TDRS-9) due to the belief that it is still a mission viable NASA asset. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated that Peraton made a case for Immediate/Emergency TDRS-9 spacecraft decommissioning, which could happen at any time since the End of Mission Plan (EOMP). (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and others believe TDRS-9 is a viable NASA asset and decommissioning it would result in an irreplaceable void and cost between \$12.5M-\$44M, since there are no new procurements.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) related that in August 2022, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) opposed the TDRS-9 decommissioning in an email that included the End of Mission Team including NASA Sustaining Engineering management. In response, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was then chastised by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) supervisor (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Peraton who also said "...jobs are on the line". (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Peraton, also issued a Peraton email to not disseminate TDRS EOMP information.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) repeated (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) opposition during TDRS-9 Disposal Readiness Review in early September 2022, which was a dry run with Peraton management prior to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) presenting the TDRS-9 decommissioning recommendation to NASA civil service. After the meeting, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) received a letter of reprimand from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) Peraton.

On May 2, 2022, the NASA OIG forwarded a Whistleblower Closing Memorandum to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) in response to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) status and concerns. The memorandum stated (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) has not established a cognizable whistleblower claim under 10 U.S. Code § 4701, because (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) employer has not taken or threatened to take an adverse personnel action against (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). This conclusion renders moot the answers to the other three questions in the test detailed supra, and therefore there is no need to conduct further investigation."

¹ TDRS-9 is part of a constellation of ten satellites in geosynchronous orbit that comprise the space segment of NASA's Near Space Network (NSN). With multiple TDRS spacecraft currently in operation to support customer missions, TDRS-9 has most recently been used for testing upgrades to the NSN and is not currently supporting active missions.

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However, additional steps were taken by the NASA OIG as a precaution to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) complaint that pertain to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) concerns about the decommissioning of TDRS-9. On May 15, 2023, the NASA OIG requested assistance from a Subject Matter Expert (SME), concerning the decommissioning of TDRS-9. The SME indicated that, “Space Communications and Navigation (SCaN) did escalate this decision through the appropriate HQ chain of command, including obtaining signature from the NASA Administrator. After reviewing this information, I would say it does not consider the risk of NASA having a “zombie satellite” in the GEO belt, threatening NASA’s public image, and the health and safety of other spacecraft near TDRS-9’s former orbital location. SCaN takes the management of the TDRS constellation seriously and decisions regarding TDRS retirements are based in technical, safety, and risk rationale, not budgetary nor programmatic rationale.”

Due to the aforementioned, no further investigative activity anticipated. This matter is closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), GSFC
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O-JS-23-0073-MR

March 20, 2023

ALLEGATION THAT SPACE CENTER HOUSTON MISREPRESENTED HISTORICAL ARTIFACT

1601 E NASA Parkway
Houston, TX 77058

CASE CLOSING: The NASA Office of Inspector General received a complaint via email that alleged Space Center Houston (SCH) was fraudulently misrepresenting the lectern on display at the museum as the genuine artifact utilized by John F. Kennedy during his speech at Rice University on September 12, 1962. The complainant alleged Rice University donated the lectern to SCH in 1993 without prior authentication, and that SCH uses the lectern as a featured artifact on their website to entice people to pay to visit the museum as well as charging to rent out the Destiny Theater. Because of ^{(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)} concerns, the complainant contacted reporter ^{(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)} News in Dallas, Texas. ^{(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)} contacted Rice University and SCH with the concerns of authenticity of the lectern artifact to which Rice University allegedly acknowledged in their email response it was never authenticated as they merely got it from their theater department and donated it to SCH in 1993. Rice University stated they had no proof it was ever used by President Kennedy as they relied on urban legend as told by faculty and staff. They indicated they had no reason to question its authenticity until now. Eventually, the curator at SCH agreed in an email response to Rice University that concerns regarding the authenticity of the lectern appeared to be accurate prompting Rice University to acknowledge it was highly unlikely that this lectern was ever used by President Kennedy.

On February 24, 2023, the OIG sent referrals to the NASA Johnson Space Center (JSC) management as well as the Smithsonian OIG since SCH was a Smithsonian affiliate.

On March 2, 2023, the Smithsonian OIG responded to the referral stating that although it was not within their investigative jurisdiction, they planned on alerting the management official who oversees the Smithsonian affiliates program about the concerns raised by the complainant.

On March 15, 2023, the OIG received a response from JSC management stating that after engaging with SCH regarding the allegations, SCH agreed to remove the lectern from its exhibits and website out of an abundance of caution until true provenance of the artifact could be proven.

On March 16, 2023, the complainant was notified of the actions taken by SCH in response to the management referral.

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This case is closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) . JSC
DISTR: File

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O-JS-23-0128-Z

May 1, 2023

CONCERNS ABOUT ARTEMIS PROJECT

Johnson Space Center
Houston, TX 77058

CASE CLOSING: On May 1, 2023, the Office of Inspector General received the following hotline complaint (Attachment):

Why is the NASA OIG remaining silent! (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) April 23, 2023
President Joseph Biden Jr. The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Washington, DC 20500
Subject: NASA May Get Us All Killed Mr. President NASA's headquarters management has misrepresented the safety of the Artemis Program and created an unacceptable environment which could cause the possible loss of a crew. However, there is an even greater possibility that their failure to acknowledge the increasing asteroid/comet threat and their refusal to develop an asteroid/comet planetary defense system may get us all killed. The Artemis Program's fatal flaw is that it is an expendable launch vehicle and cannot be reused. Every flight is a test flight which is exposed to manufacturing errors that can cause disastrous results. Of the 12 crewed Apollo missions, there were two near fatal and one fatal accident caused by manufacturing errors. Technology is available today that makes the risk of putting astronauts on expendable space vehicles unacceptable. On several occasions, this engineer has requested NASA to evaluate a proposed NASA Plan B which would develop reusable launchers and space-based tugs and be operated by a commercial space transportation system provider. The plan conceived by concerned aerospace engineers and using existing technology would provide lower launch operations cost, increased safety, and rapid launch vehicle return to flight. Rapid return to flight is a necessary requirement of the asteroid/comet defense system. The space-based tugs with sensors would detect threats and provide transportation to deter the threat. Plan B is not only key in keeping this nation the leading space faring nation, but also to providing the transportation requirements for an asteroid/comet defense system (see webpage). NASA management has rejected Plan B without any evaluation because they know it would lead to the cancellation of their failing Artemis Program. Mr. President, NASA Plan B will provide a space transportation system with lower cost and safer operation and support an asteroid/comet defense system... Artemis is a failing government jobs program which may get us all killed. What say you? (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) @wt.net (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) Webpage: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Since no actionable allegation received, this case is closed.

Attachment:
Email, dated May 2, 2023.

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by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) , JSC
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O-JS-23-0134-S

August 10, 2023

WHISTLEBLOWER – INTERN EXTERNAL RELATIONS OFFICE (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

CASE CLOSING: The Office of Inspector General (OIG) initiated this case based upon allegations received from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) on May 2, 2023, regarding potential whistleblower retaliation. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) alleged (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) identified a discrepancy during an analysis performed and subsequently reported that discrepancy to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) boss, on January 26, 2023. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) explained (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was tasked to take a look at information from the graphics department and determine what type of insights there were, based their customers and who was using the most man hours versus the requirement. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) analysis identified a difference of about \$700. Around the time of this disclosure to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) management (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) claimed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) started to be excluded from meetings and events. In addition, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) alleged there were multiple incidents from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) management and colleagues that created a hostile work environment. For example, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) claimed people in (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) office started “moaning” at (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) calling (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) names like “prick”, “pussy”, and “rat”. In addition, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) alleged (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) identified a second discrepancy while performing another analysis. This discrepancy was approximately \$300,000 and was disclosed to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) on February 13, 2023. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated the exclusions and hostile environment continued after this disclosure as well.

The OIG conducted a follow-up interview of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) on May 3, 2023, to discuss the details of the discrepancy (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) identified to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) management. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was initially tasked with combing through data to analyze workflow projections of the graphics department and document trends from the historical data. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) claimed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) found the discrepancy between an excel document (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was working with and an excel document (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) boss (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) maintained. When asked what the source data was for the two documents (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was comparing, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) said (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) got numbers from the tasks that are being used to create the contracts, or requirements they are falling into, and that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) is unaware of where (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was getting (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) numbers. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) brought the discrepancy up to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) but there was never a discussion about it. When asked if (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) followed up with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) regarding (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) finding subsequent to the Teams conversation on February 13, 2023, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) said (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) could not confirm if (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) had a verbal conversation with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). The RA confirmed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) could not identify the source document to these two excel sheets. When pressed about the source of the data, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) did not know what type of information they pulled the material from, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) just knows that there was a difference between what (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was going to report and what (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was telling (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) confirmed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) did not know what the numbers in the excel sheet actually meant.

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(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) claimed it could have been a simple conversation with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) to clear this up, but it was avoided.

The OIG communicated with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Johnson Space Center (JSC) Physical Security, who took in an additional harassment complaint by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) where it was alleged, an unknown individual stood outside (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) workspace, and made a gun shaped gesture to their head, which appeared to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) as threatening. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) performed a review of the security cameras in the area and could not substantiate the claim. On April 26, 2023, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), JSC Human Resource (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), held a meeting with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) to discuss (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) mental stability. It was decided that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) would need to complete an evaluation regarding (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) mental stability in order to return to JSC for (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). After the meeting (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) met with an unnamed member from the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) who advised (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) would escort (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) off JSC.

The OIG provided the Whistleblower Questionnaire and the Federal Employee Notice of Rights to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) returned both documents on May 3, 2023.

The OIG consulted with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Regional Counsel, NASA OIG, regarding the Whistleblower Questionnaire. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) determined that since (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was a civil servant, the case should be referred to the Office of Special Counsel. However, the OIG needed to inform (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) of this process and get (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) concurrence for the referral. The OIG attempted multiple times via email and telephone to contact (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) but (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) never responded. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was advised via email (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) could take (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) complaint directly to the Office of Special Counsel as outlined in (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) signed Federal Employee Notice of Rights. After the failed attempts to contact (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) informed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) the case can be closed due to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) lack of response. Therefore, this investigation will be closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), JSC
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C-GO-23-0142-Z

May 10, 2023

SUBJECT UNKNOWN: ALLEGED HACK OF NASA EARTHDATA WEBSITE

Goddard Space Flight Center
8800 Greenbelt RD
Greenbelt, MD, 20771

CASE INITIATION AND CLOSING: On March 20, 2023, the RA was notified about a potential incident at LARC identified by the NASA SOC CTA and documented in SOC Ticket SOC-20230318-1335437 (Attachment 1).

On March 18, 2023, the NASA SOC CTA received an alert from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) that a Pro-Russian hacktivist group (b) (7)(E) was actively targeting NASA's Earthdata website (earthdata.nasa.gov). In a public Telegram channel¹ the group claimed they had access to data from satellites from the MMS mission, accounts for users/specialist of the EOSDIS system, and several terabytes of research data, spacecraft schematics, company reports and documents²:

(b) (7)(E)

¹ [\(b\) \(7\)\(E\)](https://t.me/(b) (7)(E))

² The posting was written in Russian and translated to English using Google translate.

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The hacktivist group provided photos of spacecraft, photos of account creation on the Earthdata website, and a text file that claimed to contain passwords and usernames from the Earthdata website as proof of access to the Earthdata website (Attachment 2).

The GSFC IRT Team and the Earthdata administrators reviewed the system logs and proof of access provided by the hacktivist group and determined that their claims were grossly inflated and no compromise had occurred.

The RA independently reviewed the proof of access and concurred with the GSFC IRT findings. The photos of spacecraft included a publicly available image of the challenger spacecraft, a publicly available image of the Huygens spacecraft, and a publicly available image of the Hubble Telescope. None of the images appeared to be related to the Earthdata website. The photos of account creation on the website only showed what is available to the general public when creating an account. The pictures did not show any proof of access beyond what a member of the public would have access to.

The RA recommends the case (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and closed as there was no discernable impact to NASA operations or resources.

2 Attachments

1. SOC Ticket SOC-20230318-1335437
2. CISA Alert
3. Proof of access

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) , GSFC
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Office of Inspector General
Office of Investigations

O-MA-23-0159-MN

May 18, 2023

ALLEGED SALE OF NASA DOCUMENTS

Marshall Space Flight Center, AL

CASE INITIATION/CLOSING: We initiated this investigation based on information provided to the Reporting Agent (RA) by a NASA contract employee who is a member of a Facebook group entitled *NASA & Space Artifacts: Buy/Sale/trade*. The NASA contract employee identified an ad that was posted by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (identified as NASA Civil Servant (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)) offering for sale "about 130 SSME Flight Ops Handbooks, Flight Evaluation Reports, Flight Readiness Reviews, etc." (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) notes in the ad that the reports were assembled by the "MSFC SSME engineers" and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was offering them for sale for \$500 per box or \$3,250 for all eight boxes. A picture (attached below) accompanied the post and showed bankers boxes filled with paperwork.

The RA and Special Agent (SA) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), this office, conducted an interview of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) on May 18, 2023, during which it was confirmed that the Facebook private group post offering NASA documents for sale was authored by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) explained that the documents in question were purchased second-hand through estate sales of prominent NASA collectors for (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) own collection, with excess documents offered for sale. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) confirmed that none of the documents offered sale were removed from NASA by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) also confirmed that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) ensured none of the documents contained export control related materials before offering for sale.

The selling of NASA created records by a civil servant for personal profit could potentially be in violation of 5 C.F.R. part 2635, Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch. Specifically, the transaction may violate subsection 2635.704, Use of Government property, which states: *An employee has a duty to protect and conserve Government property and shall not use such property, or allow its use, for other than authorized purposes.*

We referred this matter to MSFC Management for further review and action deemed appropriate.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), MSFC
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O-LB-23-0161-P

October 26, 2023

FORMER NASA EMPLOYEE IN POSSIBLE POSSESSION OF CONTROLLED INFORMATION

CASE CLOSING MEMORANDUM: In December 2022, the Western Field Office (WFO) received a referral from NASA Counterintelligence (CI), Jet Propulsion Laboratory concerning (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), a former NASA employee, possibly mishandled records bearing Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI), Export Administration Regulations / International Traffic in Arms Regulations (EAR/ITAR), and NASA-sensitive markings.

The possible mishandling was reported to NASA CI by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) former employer, Millennium Space Systems (MSS), a subsidiary of The Boeing Company ("Boeing"), based on information detected during the routine pre-separation screening of files on (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) corporate laptop. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was a NASA employee of the Marshall Space Flight Center from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and worked for MSS from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) held a security clearance while employed by NASA, which (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) retained on a collateral basis while employed for MSS, but no mishandling of classified information was reported.

The NASA OIG collected a USB drive from Boeing purported to contain the contents of the laptop returned by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). A forensic review of the contents of the drive identified the following:

1. NASA documents and other records handled by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) marked EAR/ITAR, Sensitive-But-Unclassified (SBU), and NASA-sensitive.
2. Third-party records handled by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) pertaining to NASA programs marked EAR/ITAR.
3. Proprietary third-party records handled by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) marked EAR/ITAR.

The review determined (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) obtained or generated many of the sensitive records while employed by NASA, apparently retained the records (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), then transferred them to the corporate laptop owned by MSS. The review did not uncover any classified materials on the drive. The investigation did not identify any violations of EAR/ITAR or other export control regulations.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) employment with the University of Texas, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) under a NASA cooperative agreement, thereby affiliating with the Johnson Space Center (JSC). (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was provisioned with physical center access but not logical (IT) access. NASA OIG referred the matter to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) Protective Services, JSC on September 21,

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2023, for any action deemed necessary since (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) affiliation status granted (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) access to JSC. On October 4, 2023, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated no action was planned against (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

It is recommended that this preliminary investigation be closed with no further action necessary.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), LBRA
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O-LA-23-0185-Z

June 15, 2023

NASA NEXT PROGRAM TRANSPARENCY CONCERNS

Langley Research Center
Hampton, VA 23665

CASE CLOSING: On June 1, 2023, the NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG) Cyber Hotline received a complaint from (b)(6), (b)(7)(C), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C), Langley Research Center (LaRC), who alleged a lack of transparency in the selection process for the NASA NEXT¹ program (Attachment 1).

(b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was a NASA NEXT applicant who was not selected for the program. After selections were announced, (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) inquired how the selections were made and was told they were made based on the responses of the applicants. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) then requested anonymized responses of those who were chosen and the corresponding ratings, however the request was rejected. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) alleged this rejection left the selection process opaque and vulnerable to potentially unfair and illegal treatment of some of the applicants. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) coordinated with the NASA NEXT lead, the Acting Director of the LDO, the LaRC Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office, the LaRC Office of Human Resources, and the LaRC Office of General Counsel (OGC). After this coordination, (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was still unsatisfied.

The OIG coordinated with (b)(6), (b)(7)(C), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C), OGC, LaRC, who provided the OIG with OGC correspondence and guidance issued to (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) (Attachment 2). (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) noted the NASA NEXT program is a competitive process and only approximately 60 of the 579 applicants were selected. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) stated (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) coordinated with all available individuals and entities concerning the NASA NEXT program and exhausted all available options for (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) complaint. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was given guidance concerning the competitive process and encouraged to apply for the next NASA NEXT opportunity in fall 2024.

All investigative steps have been completed. Accordingly, this matter is closed.

Attachments:

1. Hotline Complaint dated June 1, 2023.
2. OGC Documents.

Prepared by: (b)(6), (b)(7)(C), EFO, LaRC
DISTR: File

¹ The NASA NEXT is a competitive learning and development program administered by the Learning and Development Office (LDO) within the NASA Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer. The program focuses on developing GS-13 and GS-14 civil servants in mid- to senior-level positions who have a high potential for assuming greater leadership responsibilities in management or program/project management roles.

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O-GO-23-0189-HL-P

September 25, 2023

MISSING MATERIAL – ROMAN SPACE TELESCOPE PROGRAM

Goddard Space Flight Center
Greenbelt, MD 20771

CASE CLOSING: The NASA IG Hotline received a complaint from the Flight Systems Test, Environmental Test Engineering & Integration Branch alleging Environmental Test and Integration Services III (ETIS III) contractor Peraton cannot account for a partial roll of silicon aluminum alloy valued at \$25,900. The material was purchased for the Roman Space Telescope (RST) program. The aluminum alloy material is often referred to as “Stamet.”

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Environmental Test Engineering & Integration Branch, Mechanical Systems Division, GSFC, confirmed the Thermal Engineering Branch (or thermal blankets group) misplaced 42 ft of Stamet. Peraton maintained custody of the material after delivery. The ETIS III (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) provided that on September 16, 2021, the product was received and on May 2, 2022, 48 of 90 feet was removed from the roll and baked out, leaving approximately 42 feet remaining that was returned to the Thermal Blanket cage, Building 7 Room 16 Cage 7-15-C. In May 2023, the remaining 42 feet of 2.75 mil stamet could not be located. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) confirmed the value of the missing stamet was approximately \$25,900.

On August 10, 2023, an OIG Management Referral was sent to the Contracting Officer (CO) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), for Missing Material – Roman Space Telescope Program (Peraton). On September 19, 2023, the OIG received a Management Response from the CO that Peraton would be responsible for replacing the 42 feet of Stamet. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated, “NASA shall work with Peraton to credit the Government an estimated amount of approximately \$21,756 for the lost 42 feet of Stamet. The credit amount was determined by applying the current market value of \$518/ft to the 42 ft being replaced.”

No further investigative activity anticipated. This matter is closed

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), GSFC
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Office of Inspector General
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O-KE-23-0191-HL-P

August 24, 2023

SBU ITEMS FOR SALE ON EBAY

Kennedy Space Center, FL

CASE CLOSING: This matter was initiated in June 2023 when the NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG) Hotline received a complaint alleging that eBay seller "The Baron's Den" posted an Orion program report marked Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) for sale on the website (<https://www.ebay.com/itm/275332022200>). The complainant believed the report contained International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) restricted content. NASA OIG coordinated this matter with Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

The investigation determined the eBay site listed a document entitled "NASA Engineer Owned 2008 Orion Ascent Abort 1 Periodic Technical Review #2 Day 2". The item was a paper bound book with a yellow cover sheet marked "SBU - Sensitive But Unclassified Information." The justification block on the coversheet stated "Some charts contain ITAR and proprietary information." Additional pictures for the listing showed diagrams and specification information, with some of the images and pages labeled "For Official Use Only." The investigation also identified two additional items of concern listed from the same seller. The items were listed as "NASA Engineer Owned 2008 Orion Ascent Abort 1 Periodic Technical Review #2 Day 1" and "NASA Engineer Owned 2008 Orion Ascent Abort 1 Periodic Technical Review #2 Day 3". These were similar in composition and appearance to the initial item reviewed.

The NASA OIG coordinated this matter with Kennedy Space Center (KSC) Export Administrator (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) advised the items appeared to be authentic United States government property, declared sensitive and labeled using legacy Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) classification markings. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated that these items would be considered Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI), containing International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) material. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) further advised these documents should have never been removed from NASA facilities.

In July 2023, this matter was coordinated with the United States Attorney's Office (USAO) – Middle District of Florida who opined the documents were ITAR controlled and authorized investigators to seize them from The Baron's Den based on their external markings.

On July 26, 2023, investigators traveled to The Baron's Den located at (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), and made contact with the owner, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C).

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(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
Approved:

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was advised that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) business may be in unlawful possession of official government property. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) retrieved the documents for investigators to review. Investigators verified the items were government property and subsequently seized them.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) obtained the items when (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) purchased the estate of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) on October 18, 2021. A review of IdMAX revealed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) employment as an engineer with Jacobs Technology at KSC (b) (6), (b) (7)(C).

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) found the estate advertised on FaceBook Marketplace, by an individual registered as “(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)” (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) met the individual at (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was adamant that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) did not know the documents were still considered official government property. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) subsequently removed the items from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) eBay page. Investigators left (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) with NASA OIG contact information should (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) come into possession of other, similarly marked items.

The USAO declined criminal prosecution of this matter.

On August 24, 2023, the recovered documents were returned to KSC Export Administrator (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

All investigative effort has been completed.

This matter is closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) , KSC
DISTR: File

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O-GO-23-0221-P

August 23, 2023

HUBBLE ITAR MATERIAL FOR SALE ON EBAY

Goddard Space Flight Center
Greenbelt, MD 20771

CASE CLOSING: Investigation initiated upon notification from the NASA Security Operation Center (SOC) that a seller on eBay posted several presentations related to the Hubble Space Telescope project marked as export-controlled under the International Traffic in Arms Regulations. The eBay seller posted that the items for sale originated from an estate sale of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), a (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) NASA Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC) aerospace engineer. The NASA SOC determined that the (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) retired in (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and passed away in (b) (6), (b) (7)(C).

Investigation revealed that the eBay seller, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), legally obtained the items from an estate sale and was unaware of the restrictions related to the export-control markings on the documents. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) agreed not to sell the export-controlled documents and was provided the number to the Export Control Office of the Marshall Space Flight Center in case (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) encounters additional materials during the course of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) business.

NASA OIG Special Agents, MSFC, explained to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) the implications of selling export-controlled documents to foreign nationals, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) understood. As a result of NASA OIG coordination, the eBay Criminal Investigations team removed the export-controlled items from the website, and they are no longer for sale.

Due to the aforementioned no further investigative activity is required; therefore, this matter is closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), GSFC
DISTR: File

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O-GO-23-0237-HL-S

August 24, 2023

POTENTIAL RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

Goddard Space Flight Center
Greenbelt, MD 20771

CASE CLOSING: Investigation initiated upon a NASA OIG Hotline complaint from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), a contract employee, alleged that (b) (6), co-authored a technical paper and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) name was omitted from the published version, and another individual was added in (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) place. The paper was, "(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)"

Investigation revealed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was listed as an author on the paper located on the NASA Technical Report Server at [\(b\) \(6\), \(b\) \(7\)\(C\)](https://ntrs.nasa.gov/citations/(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)). (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) alleged that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) name was removed from the same paper and was replaced by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), that was submitted to through the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers or the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics located at [\(b\) \(6\), \(b\) \(7\)\(C\)](https://arc.aiaa.org/doi/(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)). A review of the paper revealed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was not listed in the abstract but was listed in the body of the paper. Furthermore, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), appears to be a contributing author that was assigned to Johnson Space Center.

Due to the aforementioned no further investigative activity is required; therefore, this matter is closed.

Prepared by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), GSFC
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O-HS-23-0240-HL

August 19, 2023

APOLLO PROGRAM ARTIFACTS POSTED ON FACEBOOK

HOTLINE CASE INITIATION: On August 10, 2023, the NASA IG Hotline received a submission from an unidentified complainant alleging Facebook user (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) posted numerous Apollo program artifacts on the Space Hipsters Facebook page which admitted were illegally obtained by (b)(6), (b)(7)(C), a (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) during the 1960s.

Attachment:

1. Hotline Email (Apollo Program Artifacts Posted on Facebook) – 10Aug23

Prepared by: (b)(6), (b)(7)(C), HQ NASA
DISTR: File

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