



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

SEP - 9 2009

Case No. MUL-271

Sarah Stephens
Center for Democracy in the Americas
P.O. Box 53106
Washington, D.C. 20009

Dear Ms. Stephens:

This is in response to your letter dated May 29, 2009, addressed to Secretary Timothy Geithner concerning published reports that at least one U.S. provider, Microsoft, has stopped offering instant messaging services to users in Cuba, Syria, Iran, Sudan, and North Korea. Secretary Geithner's office forwarded your letter to the Office of Foreign Assets Control ("OFAC") so that we may be able to respond directly to your inquiry.

OFAC administers economic and trade sanctions programs pursuant to regulations published in Chapter V of Title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, various Executive Orders, Proclamations, and statutes. Other Federal agencies also administer regulations, orders, and statutes that may be applicable to sanctioned countries.

We assure you that the discontinuation of instant messaging services discussed in your letter was not directed by OFAC or, to our knowledge, any other Federal agency. Ensuring the flow and access to information available through the Internet and similar public sources is consistent with the policy interests of the United States Government.

OFAC is participating in an interagency effort to review any discontinuation of certain instant messaging services to sanctioned countries, with the goal of ensuring that such services will be available to persons in sanctioned countries to the extent permitted by current U.S. law.

Thank you for your letter.

Sincerely,

Adam J. Szubin
Director
Office of Foreign Assets Control