

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 31, 2018

Jack Dorsey
Chief Executive Officer
Twitter, Inc.
1355 Market Street
Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94103

Mark Zuckerberg
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Facebook Inc.
1 Hacker Way
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Mr. Dorsey and Mr. Zuckerberg:

We appreciate your companies' respective responses on January 26, 2018 to our joint letter dated January 22, 2018 seeking assistance to understand the role and extent of Russian-affiliated social media accounts involved in promoting the #ReleaseTheMemo hashtag.¹ Although we are encouraged by your companies' continued willingness to work with Congress to raise awareness about potential abuse of your platforms by agents of foreign influence, your replies have raised more questions than they have answered.

It is unclear from your responses whether you believe any of the Russian-linked accounts involved in this influence campaign violated your respective user policies. We reiterate our request that you immediately take necessary steps to expose and deactivate such accounts if you determine that they violate your respective user policies. We ask that you notify users who may have seen these foreign influence postings, and provide us with a description of proactive steps your companies are taking to identify, prevent, and thwart such foreign influence campaigns on your platforms in the future.

The response from Facebook fails to indicate whether the company has conducted any analysis of the issue we raised concerning possible Russian-affiliated attempts to amplify calls to release a misleading, classified memo written by Republican staff on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (an online effort we will refer to

¹ Original letter: https://democrats-intelligence.house.gov/uploadedfiles/final_feinstein_schiff_1.23.18.pdf

broadly as the #ReleaseTheMemo campaign). And as more fully described below, Twitter inexplicably confined its response to “original content” and neglected to answer the question of whether Russian sources were actively engaged in promoting the #ReleaseTheMemo hashtag, as illuminated by the Hamilton 68 dashboard of the German Marshall Fund.

As that dashboard made clear in the findings we asked you to investigate: “Content is not necessarily produced or created by Russian government operatives, although that is sometimes the case. Instead, the network often opportunistically amplifies content created by third parties not directly linked to Russia.”² By failing to address whether Russian-tied online accounts on Twitter or Facebook were – or still are – amplifying the #ReleaseTheMemo campaign and related messaging, we are no closer to understanding Russia’s continuing interference in our democratic affairs.

On January 19, 2018, Twitter transmitted to Congress an update to its retrospective review of Russian activity on its platform and identified an additional 1,062 accounts connected to Russia that attempted to influence an American election that took place well over a year ago. We cannot wait another year to learn how Kremlin-linked trolls and bots are currently exploiting your platforms to influence debates going on in Congress today.

It is our belief that the core questions raised in our first letter remain largely unaddressed:

- whether and how many accounts linked to Russian influence operations were involved in the #ReleaseTheMemo campaign;
- the frequency and volume of their postings on this topic; and
- how many legitimate Twitter and Facebook account holders have been exposed to this campaign.

We remain gravely concerned about any foreign attempts to undermine or discredit the ongoing inquiries by Congressional committees and Special Counsel Mueller into Russian active measures during the 2016 U.S. elections. To that end, we are submitting a series of new questions stemming from our original request about any pro-Russian or Kremlin-linked efforts to promote the #ReleaseTheMemo campaign – whether through

² <http://dashboard.securingdemocracy.org/>

original content generation or through content amplification via automated, false, or “troll” accounts.

Although some of these questions and requests may appear more relevant to one platform or the other, we ask that your companies nonetheless provide responses with any information, data, or context that is relevant to our underlying concern: that Moscow has persevered undeterred in its attempts to manipulate or exploit social media conversations on politically divisive topics. As the 2018 election season begins in earnest, we cannot allow Russia or any other outside power to manipulate U.S. public opinion or degrade Americans’ trust in the authenticity of domestic political and policy debates.

We therefore ask that you provide responses to the following:

1. To the extent possible, please explain the analysis undertaken to assess the role that Kremlin-affiliated or -directed Twitter or Facebook accounts played in the #ReleaseTheMemo campaign online. Please provide relevant specific data for posts on your platform that referenced the #ReleaseTheMemo campaign and related messaging, including the volume of posts of original content versus reposts, and a geographical breakdown of original posts versus reposts.
2. Were these analyses limited only to those users previously identified as affiliated with the Russian Internet Research Agency (IRA) troll farm? Did your companies look at other Russian-linked online operatives or propagandists, including trolls, automated accounts, and “botnets?”
3. What types of “geographic data,” did your companies rely on, if any, to analyze potential Russian involvement in the #ReleaseTheMemo campaign? For instance, in its responses to Questions for the Record dated January 15, 2018 to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Twitter wrote that “there are technological limits to what we can determine based on the information we can detect regarding a user’s origin.” In this instance, did your companies’ analyses take into account IP addresses, users’ self-identified locations, or other data points? Did a focus on a limited set of geographic indicators for identifying Russian-affiliated users involved in the #ReleaseTheMemo campaign circumscribe the universe of social media accounts you examined? For instance, were accounts with European indicators included in your analyses?
4. Did your companies’ analyses focus solely on those accounts responsible for producing “original content” tied to the #ReleaseTheMemo campaign? Or did

those analyses fully account for any efforts by online Russian-linked operatives or propagandists to re-share, retweet, or otherwise amplify the hashtag and related content – even if those social media accounts did not create the “original content?”

5. Did your companies identify any #ReleaseTheMemo-related content or discussion linked to Russian-affiliated accounts “jumping” or otherwise moving across your platforms? For instance, we know during the 2016 election that similar IRA-generated socially divisive content and messaging appeared on both of your platforms. Was any comparable analysis conducted in this case?
6. A recent media report suggested that more than 1,000 new Twitter accounts that were created between Thursday, January 18 and Sunday, January 21 combined to tweet or retweet the #ReleaseTheMemo hashtag almost 5,000 times.³ That report also found “about 200 of the accounts had only sent four or fewer tweets by Sunday night, with at least one featuring the #ReleaseTheMemo hashtag.”⁴ Did any of these accounts suggest linkages to Russian influence operatives engaging in manufactured amplification of the hashtag?
7. Another recent media report spotlighted how individuals and entities can purchase fraudulent or fake social media users to artificially raise their profiles online.⁵ To what extent have your companies analyzed if and how agents connected to the Russian government’s influence operations have employed this technique to boost Moscow’s disinformation campaigns online? And are you able to verify whether such inauthentic social media accounts bought in bulk were used by Russian-linked influence networks online to promote the #ReleaseTheMemo campaign?
8. As noted in our previous letter, Kremlin-linked social media accounts amplified WikiLeaks’ offer of \$1 million for the misleading, Republican-authored memo. Did your companies specifically analyze the accounts retweeting or sharing

³ Donie O’Sullivan, “Hundreds of newly created Twitter accounts pushed #ReleaseTheMemo,” CNN, Jan. 24, 2018.

⁴ Id.

⁵ Nicholas Confessore, Gabriel J.X. Dance, Richard Harris, and Mark Hansen, “The Follower Factory,” The New York Times, Jan. 27, 2018.

WikiLeaks' request for someone to leak the memo for potential links to Russian social media operatives or online agents?

Given the continued urgency that Congress and the public at large fully understand these matters, we ask that you provide a response to our original questions, as informed by our follow-up requests for additional information, by February 7, 2018.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress