

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 23, 2018

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

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

Dear Mr. Dorsey and Mr. Zuckerberg:

We seek your companies' urgent assistance. Public reports indicate that accounts linked to the Russian government are again exploiting Twitter and Facebook platforms in an effort to manipulate public opinion.<sup>1</sup> These recent Russian efforts are intended to influence congressional action and undermine Special Counsel Mueller's investigation, which has already resulted in the indictments of two Trump campaign officials and guilty pleas from two others, who are both now cooperating with prosecutors. It is critically important that the Special Counsel's investigation be allowed to proceed without interference from inside or outside the United States. That is why we seek your assistance in our efforts to counter Russia's continuing efforts to manipulate public opinion and undermine American democracy and the rule of law.

Specifically, on Thursday, January 18, 2018, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) Majority voted to allow Members of the U.S. House of Representatives to review a misleading talking points "memo" authored by Republican staff that selectively references and distorts highly classified information. The rushed decision to make this document available to the full

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<sup>1</sup> Natasha Bertrand, "Russia-linked Twitter accounts are working overtime to help Devin Nunes and Wikileaks," Business Insider, Jan. 19, 2018; Ken Dilanian and Mike Memoli, "Right-wing demand to #ReleaseTheMemo endorsed by Russian bots, trolls," NBC News, January 19, 2018; Warren Strobel and Jonathan Landay, "In fight over Russia memo, Republicans have unusual ally," Reuters, January 19, 2018.

House of Representatives was followed quickly by calls from some quarters to release the document to the public.

Several Twitter hashtags, including *#ReleaseTheMemo*, calling for release of these talking points attacking the Mueller investigation were born in the hours after the Committee vote.<sup>2</sup> According to the German Marshall Fund's Alliance for Securing Democracy, this effort gained the immediate attention and assistance of social media accounts linked to Russian influence operations.<sup>3</sup> By Friday, January 19, 2018, the *#ReleaseTheMemo* hashtag was "the top trending hashtag among Twitter accounts believed to be operated by Kremlin-linked groups."<sup>4</sup> Its use had "increased by 286,700 percent" and was being used "100 times more than any other hashtag" by accounts linked to Russian influence campaigns.<sup>5</sup> These accounts are also promoting an offer by WikiLeaks to pay up to \$1 million to anyone who leaks this classified partisan memo.

If these reports are accurate, we are witnessing an ongoing attack by the Russian government through Kremlin-linked social media actors directly acting to intervene and influence our democratic process. This should be disconcerting to all Americans, but especially your companies as, once again, it appears the vast majority of their efforts are concentrated on your platforms. This latest example of Russian interference is in keeping with Moscow's concerted, covert, and continuing campaign to manipulate American public opinion and erode trust in our law enforcement and intelligence institutions.

We understand Facebook and Twitter have developed significant expertise in identifying inauthentic and malicious accounts. Further, your forensic investigations into Russian government exploitation of your platforms during the 2016 U.S. election have helped expose to the American public the vast extent of Russia's covert influence efforts. We therefore request that your companies conduct an in-depth forensic examination of this real-time activity on your platforms to determine:

1. whether and how many accounts linked to Russian influence operations are involved in this campaign;

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<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Fox News, "Hannity," January 18, 2018, available at <http://www.foxnews.com/transcript/2018/01/18/rebs-jim-jordan-and-matt-gaetz-on-fisa-abuses.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Bertrand, *supra*, note 1.


<sup>4</sup> Ali Breland, "Russian Twitter accounts pushing for release of 'shocking' surveillance memo," *The Hill*, Jan. 19, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

2. the frequency and volume of their postings on this topic; and
3. how many legitimate Twitter and Facebook account holders have been exposed to this campaign.

Given the urgency of this matter, we ask that you provide a public report to Congress and the American public by January 26, 2018. In addition, we urge your companies to immediately take necessary steps to expose and deactivate accounts involved in this influence operation that violate your respective user policies.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress