



**One Hundred Sixteenth Congress
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515**

April 10, 2019

Ms. Susan Wojcicki
CEO
YouTube
901 Cherry Avenue
San Bruno, CA 94066

Mr. Satya Nadella
CEO
Microsoft
One Microsoft Way
Redmond, WA 98052

Mr. Mark Zuckerberg
CEO
Facebook
1 Hacker Way
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Mr. Jack Dorsey
CEO
Twitter
1355 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Ms. Wojcicki, Mr. Zuckerberg, Mr. Nadella, and Mr. Dorsey:

Thank you for your willingness to engage with the Committee on Homeland Security on the critically important task of combating terrorist exploitation of online platforms.

As you know well, terrorist groups have used social media, including your platforms, in sophisticated ways to spread their ideologies across the world. ISIS, for example, has made use of social media to inspire and recruit members across the world, producing relatively polished videos of shocking brutality and violence—designed to go viral and build the notoriety of the group.¹ Prior to major policy changes by your companies, ISIS was able to spread its noxious ideology through a network of tens of thousands of accounts on platforms like Twitter.² ISIS terrorists have distributed horrific content like the beheading of James Foley, an American journalist, posted on YouTube as “a message to America,”³ and the beheading of 21 Egyptian Christians in Libya,

¹ Antonia Ward, *ISIS's Use of Social Media Still Poses a Threat to Stability in the Middle East and Africa*, RAND, Dec. 11, 2018, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2018/12/isis-use-of-social-media-still-poses-a-threat-to-stability.html>.

² J.M. Berger and Jonathon Morgan, *The ISIS Twitter census: Defining and describing the population of ISIS supporters on Twitter*, BROOKINGS, Mar. 5, 2015, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-isis-twitter-census-defining-and-describing-the-population-of-isis-supporters-on-twitter/>.

³ Rukmini Callimachi, *Militant Group Says It Killed American Journalist in Syria*, NEW YORK TIMES, Aug. 19, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/20/world/middleeast/isis-james-foley-syria-execution.html>.

posted on Twitter.⁴ Earlier this year, Facebook accounts sympathetic to ISIS distributed a video of a suicide bombing in Syria, which killed 16 people, including four U.S. service members.⁵

Domestic extremists, including white supremacist extremists and anti-government extremists, have also made use of online platforms to connect with like-minded individuals and spread their ideologies on niche websites as well as mainstream platforms, including Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. The far-right extremist who mailed pipe bombs to Democratic politicians, CNN, and critics of President Trump last year was radicalized online—consuming, posting, and reposting increasingly violent right-wing content on Twitter and Facebook before attempting mass murder.⁶ The white nationalist, anti-Semitic terrorist who murdered 11 worshipers at a synagogue in Pittsburgh regularly posted hateful content on Gab, an alt-right social media platform.⁷ And last month, a white supremacist terrorist killed 50 people and injured 50 more in two mosques in New Zealand. The attack was live-streamed on Facebook, the video was reposted millions of times on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, and the killer’s manifesto went viral online.⁸

During a briefing to the Committee on March 27, 2019, your representatives conveyed your companies’ commitment to combating foreign and domestic terrorist content and other violent or hateful material on your platforms. While we appreciated their strong words, we expect to see these verbal commitments backed up with financial resources, personnel, and technological investments.

As you all know, a budget is a statement of values. We believe that the level of resources your companies allocate to containing and combating online terrorist content is a reflection of the seriousness with which you are approaching this issue. As such, we respectfully request information regarding the value you place on your counter-terrorism programs.

Please provide the following information by April 24, 2019:

- your company’s annual budget for (1) counter-terrorism programs and (2) related programs, expressed as absolute numbers as well as percentages of your company’s total annual operating budget;
- the number of personnel working solely on counter-terrorism and related programs—including policy, legal, administrative, and technical staff, as well as content moderators—categorized by type of employee and expressed as the number of employees or full-time equivalents;
- the number of experts on staff who specialize in far-right extremism, such as white supremacist and white nationalist movements;

⁴ David Mack, *U.S. and U.N. condemn “despicable” ISIS beheading of Egyptian Christians in Libya*, BUZZFEED NEWS, Feb. 16, 2015, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/davidmack/isis-egypt-christians-beheading-video>.

⁵ Christopher Carbone, *ISIS accounts on Facebook share videos of Syria suicide bombing*, FOX NEWS, Jan. 16, 2019, <https://www.foxnews.com/tech/isis-accounts-on-facebook-share-videos-of-syria-suicide-bombing>.

⁶ Kevin Roose, *Cesar Sayoc’s Path on Social Media: From Food Photos to Partisan Fury*, NEW YORK TIMES, Oct. 27, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/27/technology/cesar-sayoc-facebook-twitter.html>.

⁷ Kevin Roose, *On Gab, an Extremist-Friendly Site, Pittsburgh Shooting Suspect Aired His Hatred in Full*, NEW YORK TIMES, Oct. 28, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/28/us/gab-robert-bowers-pittsburgh-synagogue-shootings.html>.

⁸ Craig Timberg, Drew Harwell, Hamza Shaban, Andrew Ba Tran, & Brian Fung, *The New Zealand shooting shows how YouTube and Facebook spread hate and violent images – yet again*, WASHINGTON POST, Mar. 15, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2019/03/15/facebook-youtube-twitter-amplified-video-christchurch-mosque-shooting/>.

- the number of experts on staff who specialize in foreign terrorist organizations, such as ISIS and Al Qaeda; and
- the number of experts on staff who specialize in other forms of extremism, including emerging movements.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



MAX ROSE
Chairman
Subcommittee on Intelligence & Counterterrorism



SHEILA JACKSON LEE
Member
Subcommittee on Intelligence & Counterterrorism



JAMES LANGEVIN
Member
Subcommittee on Intelligence & Counterterrorism



ELISSA SLOTKIN
Member
Subcommittee on Intelligence & Counterterrorism

CC: Will McCants, Global Public Policy Lead, Hate Speech & Terrorism, *YouTube*
Brian Fishman, Policy Director for Counterterrorism, *Facebook*
Linda Norman, Vice President & Deputy General Counsel, *Microsoft*
Nick Pickles, Senior Strategist, Public Policy, *Twitter*