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COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERVIEW OF: [REDACTED]

Wednesday, June 21, 2023

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in room 164, Cannon House Office Building, commencing at 10:05 a.m.

1 A Yes.

2 Q And so, in this October 2020 report, you removed people behind an account
3 that posted images of George Floyd, one which said George Floyd and used the hashtag
4 Justice for Floyd, correct?

5 A That's what I see in the report.

6 Q And the report indicates that these were profile photos used by spammers
7 from Vietnam and Cambodia.

8 A I see that.

9 Q And it didn't matter that they were using profile photos and posting about
10 themes that were -- many would associate with the American left.

11 A The contents of this wouldn't matter. What we -- in fact, we regularly
12 see -- here, we're talking about financially motivated actors. Financially motivated
13 actors engage with issues on all portions of the political spectrum around the world.
14 They're not interested in a particular point of view. They're interested in trying to
15 deceive people and trying to make money.

16 Q And you take them down regardless.

17 A We do.

18 Q Thank you.

19 I want to talk a little bit about Meta's information sharing with the
20 U.S. Government in its fight against CIB and foreign influence.

21 You were asked some questions about the Foreign Influence Task Force. Do you
22 know, when did Meta start communicating with the Foreign Influence Task Force?

23 A I don't remember the exact -- I don't remember when we started
24 communicating with them.

25 Q Do you remember if you were engaging with them before the -- before

1 President Biden was inaugurated?

2 A Was inaugurated?

3 Q Yeah.

4 A Certainly, yes.

5 Q Okay. So that relationship began at least during the Trump administration
6 or was active during the Trump administration.

7 A My memory is that that relationship began around when the task force was
8 created.

9 Q And do you know when that was?

10 A I don't remember exactly, but it was during the Trump administration, yes.

11 Q Thank you.

12 And Meta's communication with the task force and relationship with the task
13 force is a voluntary choice that Meta makes, correct?

14 A Yes.

15 Q You could choose not to receive information from them if you wanted to.

16 A True.

17 Q And you could choose not to have members of your team attend their
18 meetings.

19 A Correct.

20 Q And did any government official ever tell Meta that it was required to work
21 with or communicate with the task force?

22 A No.

23 Q Why did Meta choose to work with the task force?

24 A We generally look to receive information from external parties. We would
25 much rather get information than not get it so that we can then subsequently conduct

1 our own investigation. And if we identify something that violates our policies, we then
2 take action.

3 We certainly have seen cases -- in fact, we talked about one a few minutes
4 ago -- where the U.S. Government was able to share information with us that helped us
5 identify a foreign interference campaign, a CIB operation, that we were then able to
6 enforce against.

7 Q And the information sharing is a two-way street, correct? You will notify
8 sometimes government actors ahead of publishing your CIB reports, or at the time you
9 publish your CIB reports, to let them know of networks that you've uncovered?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And the task force is not focused just on foreign influence on -- well, let me
12 ask you. Is it focused just on foreign influence on U.S. elections, or is it focused on
13 foreign influence globally?

14 A I'm actually not sure if it's focused globally.

15 Q You're not sure. Fair enough.

16 You talked about communications with the State Department's Global
17 Engagement Center. Do you know when that relationship with Meta began?

18 A I don't remember the -- when it began, no.

19 Q But do you remember communicating with them in 2020?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And, again, that was during the Trump administration.

22 A Yes.

23 Q And as with the Foreign Influence Task Force, Meta's communication with
24 the Global Engagement Center is entirely voluntary.

25 A Yes.

1 Q You could choose to cut off that line of communication at any time.

2 A Yes.

3 Q But you prefer to keep it open because, as you said, it's important to Meta to
4 identify as many of these networks as possible.

5 A Yes. And I would rather we get the information and be able to conduct the
6 investigation ourselves.

7 Q And you talked about Meta's relationship with CISA and the industry working
8 group meetings.

9 A Yes.

10 Q That also is a voluntary relationship?

11 A Yes.

12 Q You could choose not to participate at any time?

13 A Yes.

14 Q But you choose to participate?

15 A We do.

16 Q Okay. And with both of those, the Global Engagement Center and CISA, are
17 those also two-way communication? You're receiving information, but also sharing it
18 sometimes?

19 A Certainly.

20 Q Okay.

21 A Although, to the point we discussed earlier, in terms of information received
22 from government, specific tips about -- specific information about operations were more
23 likely received from the FBI than other partners.

24 Q And when Meta receives the tips, specific tips about operations, whether it's
25 from the FBI or other nongovernmental partners, you don't just act, correct?

1 A No.

2 Q Meta conducts its own internal investigation.

3 A Correct. Whenever we receive information from any third party, whether
4 government or nongovernment, we conduct our own investigation based on what they
5 share with us.

6 If we ultimately identify assets on our platform that violate our policies, we then
7 take the decision to take action, but only based on our own independent investigation.

8 Q And based on your own independent determination that --

9 A Yes.

10 Q -- the information uncovered by the investigation violates Meta's community
11 standards.

12 A Correct. In fact, often the information received isn't about our platform.
13 So it might be an awareness that there are websites that may be controlled by Russian
14 actors that we can't even act on that directly. We run our own investigation. And if
15 based on that information we identify assets on our platform, we take the decision
16 whether or not to act depending on if they violate our policies.

17 Q And it's Meta's decision, not the government's.

18 [REDACTED]: I'm sorry, [REDACTED].

19 [REDACTED]: We're getting close to noon.

20 [REDACTED]: I'm happy to take a break in the middle, whatever you guys
21 prefer.

22 [REDACTED]: Yeah. We'd prefer -- why don't we finish this line, and then we'll
23 take a break.

24 [REDACTED]: Okay. This, I think, will be fairly quick.

25 BY [REDACTED]:

1 Q So when an account is taken down for violating Meta's policies against CIB or
2 foreign influence, it's not because the government wanted an account or a page
3 removed, correct?

4 A Correct.

5 Q It's because Meta made the decision.

6 A When we take action on a piece of content under our CIB policies or other
7 policies, it's because we make that determination.

8 Q And, if you do not take action --

9 A It's also because we make that determination.

10 Q Thank you.

11 [REDACTED]: You know what? We can stop here, and I'll pick up.

12 [REDACTED]: Thank you.

13 [Recess.]

14 [REDACTED]: Okay. We're back on the record.

15 And I want to start, [REDACTED], by cleaning something up that I handled very
16 inelegantly before, and I'd like to introduce into the record exhibit 2, which is the policy
17 update from October 21st, 2019.

18 [REDACTED] Exhibit No. 2

19 [REDACTED] Was marked for identification.]

20 [REDACTED]: Actually, can I get one?

21 [REDACTED]: Do you have any more? I'm sorry.

22 [REDACTED]: I'm sorry?

23 BY [REDACTED]:

24 Q And the only question I'm going to ask you about that, [REDACTED], is you
25 authored this document, correct?

1 A I certainly see my name there, yes.

2 Q Okay. And it was published on Meta's platform on -- well, on Meta's
3 website on October 21st, 2019.

4 A [Nonverbal response.]

5 Q Thank you.

6 So we were talking before the break about Meta's choice to communicate with
7 government agencies and Meta's independent evaluation of tips, other information it
8 receives about CIB networks.

9 To your knowledge, has anyone in any government agency ordered Meta to take
10 down an account or page that it believed was violating your policies against influence
11 operations or CIB?

12 A You mean a U.S. Government agency?

13 Q U.S. Government agency, correct.

14 A No.

15 Q And, to your knowledge, has any U.S. Government agency -- anyone in a
16 U.S. Government agency ever tried to coerce or pressure Meta into taking down an
17 account that it believed violated Meta's policies against foreign interference or CIB?

18 A No.

19 Q And those are policies that you deal with, correct?

20 A Correct.

21 Q And, to your knowledge, has anyone in the government threatened Meta
22 with any adverse consequences if it did not take down accounts that it thought violated
23 Meta's policies against foreign influence?

24 A No.

25 Q You spoke earlier about foreign influence operations of other countries that