# Matt Taibbi Reveals Big Tech Is Managed, Controlled And Censored By Spy Agencies

Sun, 25 Dec 2022 12:02:36, swmof88, [post\_tag: censored-by-spy-agencies, post\_tag: controlled, post\_tag: matt-taibbi-reveals-big-tech-managed, category: news, post\_tag: twitterfiles]

# Twitter Files Thread: The Spies Who Loved Twitter

From FBI to DNI the DNI to "OGA," the full thread on Twitter and its intelligence partners

- Dump your smart phone
   Never put your ID on anything on the web
   Never leave the battery in your phone
   Never write any personal info on a phone or computer

Matt Taibbi





44,025Likes18,468Retweets

2. After weeks of "Twitter Files" reports, the FBI issued a statement Wednesday.

It didn't refute allegations. Instead, it decried "conspiracy theorists" publishing "misinformation," whose "sole aim" is to "discredit the agency."

The men and women of the FBI work every day to protect the American public... It is unfortunate that conspiracy theorists and others are feeding the American public misinformation with the sole purpose of attempting to discredit the agency.

- 3. They must think us unambitious, if our "sole aim" is to discredit the FBI. After all, a whole range of government agencies discredit themselves in the #TwitterFiles. Why stop with one?
- 4. The files show the FBI acting as doorman to a vast program of social media surveillance and censorship, encompassing agencies across the federal government from the State Department to the Pentagon to the CIA.
- 5. The operation is far bigger than the reported 80 members of the Foreign Influence Task Force (FITF), which also facilitates requests from a wide array of smaller actors from local cops to media to state government
- 6. Thousands upon thousands of official "reports" flowed through the FITF and the FBI's San Francisco field office.
- 7. On June 29th, 2020, San Francisco FBI agent Elvis Chan wrote to pair of Twitter execs asking if he could invite an "OGA" to an upcoming NGO-sponsored conference

- 8. OGA, or "Other Government Organization," is often a euphemism for CIA, and according to multiple former intelligence officials and contractors
- 9. Chuckles one: "They use it to seem mysterious to outsiders."
- 10. "Other Government Agency (the place where I worked for 27 years)," says retired CIA officer Ray McGovern.
- 11. It was an open secret at Twitter that one of its executives was ex-CIA, which is why Chan referred to that executive's "former employer."
- 12. The first Twitter executive abandons all pretense to stealth and emails that the employee "used to work for the CIA, so that is Elvis's question."

I know. Let me see if it is publicly announced and I will tell him that. (I thought my silence was understood.)



#### **Stacia Cardille**

Fwd: [inform] Info Ops Conference with Carnegie To: Jim Baker

July 8, 2020 at 9:22 AM

Sunlight conference tomorrow. No need for you to attend. Carnegie is doing the heavy lift. I offered to assist Nick and Yoel, but there are no academic papers to review or anything. I was

I invited the FBI, and I believe that the CIA will virtually attend too.

involved in the early scoping of the joint project as well.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks, Stacia

- 14. Cardille then passes on conference details to recently-hired ex-FBI lawyer Jim Baker.
- 15. "I invited the FBI and the CIA virtually will attend too," Cardille says to Baker, casually adding: "No need for you to attend."



#### **Stacia Cardille**

July 8, 2020 at 9:22 AM

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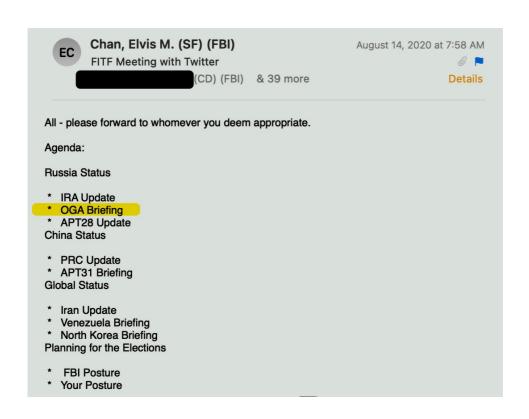
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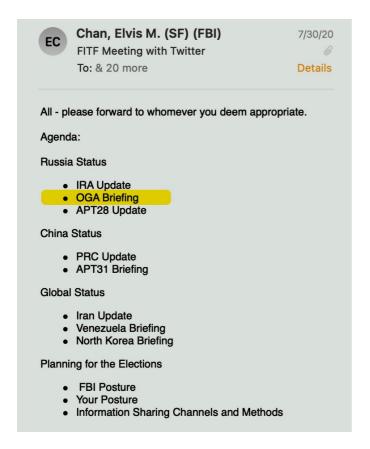
Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks, Stacia

- $16\ . \ The\ government\ was\ in\ constant\ contact\ not\ just\ with\ Twitter\ but\ with\ virtually\ every\ major\ tech\ firm.$
- 17. These included Facebook, Microsoft, Verizon, Reddit, even Pinterest, and many others.
- 18. One of the most common forums was a regular meeting of the multi-agency Foreign Influence Task Force (FITF), attended by spates of executives, FBI personnel, and nearly always one or two attendees marked "OGA."



• The FITF meeting agendas virtually always included, at or near the beginning, an "OGA briefing," usually about foreign matters (hold that thought).





(CD) (FBI) & 39 more

Details

All - please forward to whomever you deem appropriate.

#### Agenda:

# Russia Status

- \* IRA Update

  \* OGA Briefing

  \* APT28 Update

#### China Status

- \* PRC Update \* APT31 Briefing

# Global Status

- \* Iran Update\* Venezuela Briefing
- \* North Korea Briefing

# Planning for the Elections

- \* FBI Posture
- \* Your Posture

## Hi Stacia,

I know it's bananas right now over there, but I'm wondering if we can get something on the calendar for the next round of FITF meetings. Here are the open dates/times which are left:

Tuesday, August 11, 10:30 am to 12 pm PDT Wednesday, August 12, 10:30 am to 12 pm PDT Thursday, August 13, 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm PDT Friday, August 14, 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm PDT

The tentative agenda is as follows:

## Russia Status

- IRA Update
- OGA briefing (Software & influence campaign against Ukraine)

#### China Status

- General PRC Update
- APT31 briefing

#### **Global Status**

- Iran Update
- · Venezuela briefing
- North Korea briefing

## Planning for U.S. Elections

- FBI Posture
- Your Posture
- Information sharing channels and methods

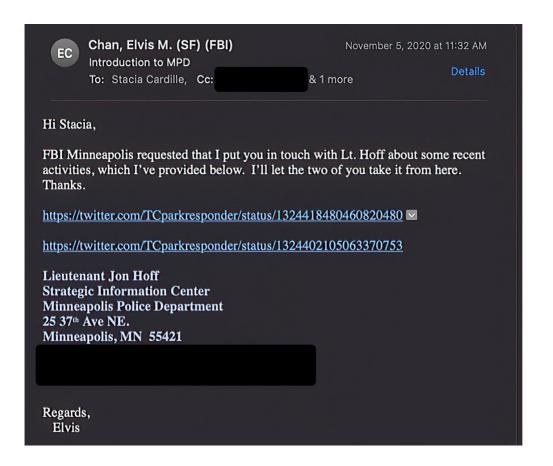
# Regards,

Elvis

## Elvis M. Chan

Supervisory Special Agent

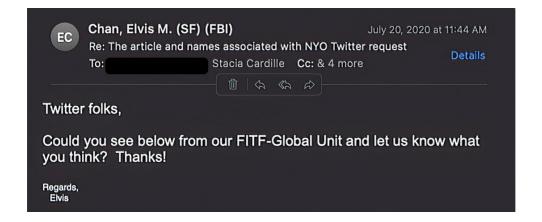
Despite its official remit being "Foreign Influence," the FITF and the SF FBI office became conduit for mountains of domestic moderation requests, from state governments, even local police:



• Many requests arrived via Teleporter, a one-way platform in which many communications were timed to vanish:



Especially as the election approached in 2020, the FITF/FBI overwhelmed Twitter with requests, sending spreadsheets with hundreds of accounts:





Begin forwarded message:

From: Stacia Cardille <a href="mailto:@twitter.com">@twitter.com</a>>

Subject: FBI Report on Possible Violative Content

Date: November 3, 2020 at 5:24:37 PM PST To: <a href="https://www.example.com/">wtwitter.com/</a>

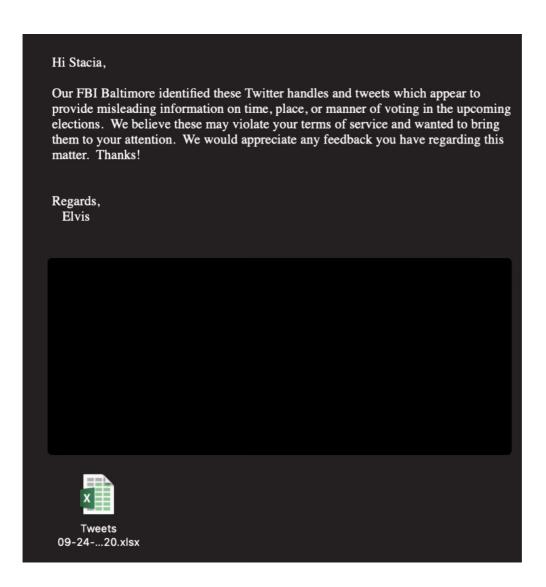
Cc: US Elections Escalations

The FBI San Francisco Emergency Operations Center sent us the attached report of 207 Tweets they believe may be in in violation of our policies.

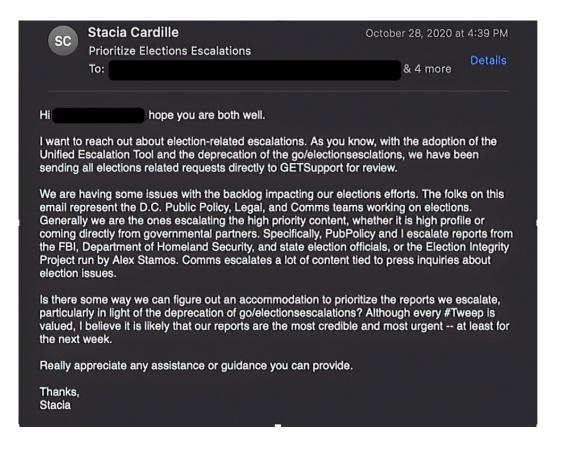
Spreadsheet attached.

Thank you, Stacia

Email after email came from the San Francisco office heading into the election, often adorned with an Excel attachment:



There were so many government requests, Twitter employees had to improvise a system for prioritizing/triaging them:

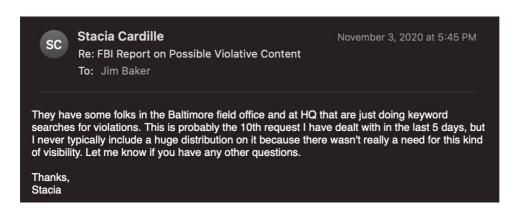


• The FBI was clearly tailoring searches to Twitter's policies. FBI requests were almost always phrased as "possible terms of service violation" somewhere, even in the subject line:

Chan, Elvis M. (SF) (FBI)

FW: Possible Terms of Service Violation - Twitter

- Twitter executives noticed the FBI appeared to be assigning personnel to look for Twitter violations
- "They have some folks in the Baltimore field office and at HQ that are just doing keyword searches for violations. This is probably the 10th request I have dealt with in the last 5 days." remarked Cardille.



• Even ex-FBI lawyer Jim Baker agreed: "Odd that they are searching for violations of our policies."



# Jim Baker

November 3, 2020 at 6:34 PM

Re: FBI Report on Possible Violative Content

To: Stacia Cardille

But also odd that they are searching for violations of our policies.

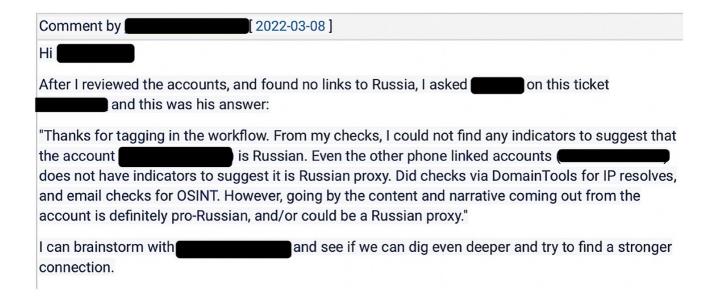
Although so much of this activity was domestic, "Foreign meddling" had been the ostensible justification for expanded moderation since platforms like Twitter were dragged to the Hill by the Senate in 2017:

The New York Times

Tech Executives Are Contrite About Election Meddling, but Make Few Promises on Capitol Hill · Yet behind the scenes, Twitter executives struggled against government claims of foreign interference, on their platform and others:

[UE-193128] FITF Referral: IRA account on Reddit Created: 2022-08-09 Updated: 2022-08-15 Resolved: 2022-08-15	
Status:	Closed
Project:	Unified Escalations
Affects Version/s:	None
Fix Version/s:	None
Security Level:	SI RESTRICTED

- 31. The #TwitterFiles show execs under constant pressure to validate theories of foreign influence and unable to find evidence for key assertions.
- 32. "Found no links to Russia," says one analyst, but suggests he could "brainstorm" to "find a stronger connection."



19. "Extremely tenuous circumstantial chance of being related," says another.

Hey

Looked into this here. Didn't find any exact naming matches and really any information to link the reddit account(s) to any on-platform presence at Twitter. There was one account that has an incredibly tenuous circumstantial chance of being related so documenting the account here just incase we ever need to come back to it (created in a similar timeframe, RU login, sus english name):

No real matches using most of the info. The only thing that did turn up something was the IP addresses and accounts using multiple from the provided.

Even then, nothing looked particularly violative, some clearly Russian though, but also included an account for a house rental in South Carolina?

<u>Yoel Roth</u> not really anything worth taking out. But there are 2 personas linked to 2 clusters they might be interested in. Both appear to be Russian-like names. However, I wouldn't even call that a slam dunk since it was based on IP data and I think at least 1 of the returned accounts form the IP data doesn't at all look related.

• In another case, Roth concludes a series of Venezuelan pro-Maduro accounts are unrelated to Russia's Internet Research Agency, because they're too high-volume:

# Hey

Thanks for reaching out. A couple of things from a quick review of this data:

A few of the accounts whose tweets appear in your list are not IRA/Russia-linked. In Feb 2019, we re-released our IRA-linked datasets, excluding a number of accounts that were operated out of Venezuela. Those accounts were extremely high volume tweeters, generally using automation (in a way that was pretty uncharacteristic of a lot of the other IRA activity). We have very high confidence that they are not linked to the IRA, or to Russian activity in any form. The current official datasets you can download from us do not include these accounts in the RU archive, and instead include them in a Jan 2019 release of Venezuelan activity (titled "Venezuela (January 2019, set 2) - 764 accounts"). If you download the unhashed Venezuela release, you should be able to cross-reference and exclude.

Also, at least a couple of the tweets I spot-checked were deleted by the users themselves. When we first published our archives of Russian activity, we indicated that we excluded tweets deleted prior to the suspension of the account, amounting to a less than 1% decrease in the volume of tweets (as

best we were able to tell). We had to exclude them due to legal constraints. But, again, the volume there should be a very small part of the overall RU activity - if you see something different after excluding the Venezuelan accounts, let me know and I can dig back in.

Thanks,

Yoel

- 37. In a key email, news that the State Department is making a wobbly public assertion of Russian influence leads an exec the same one with the "OGA" past to make a damning admission:
- 38. "Due to a lack of technical evidence on our end, I've generally left it be, waiting for more evidence," he says. "Our window on that is closing, given that government partners are becoming more aggressive on attribution."



Yep. InfoBRICS is an entity that we've received previous notice on, though if recollection serves, government partners have never been so specific as to say that it was directly controlled by the GRU. BRICS is an inherently Russia-dominated economic organization, so it was always likely that a website and Twitter account designed to promote it would be directed by the Kremlin. Due to a lack of technical evidence on our end, I've generally left it be, waiting for more evidence. I think that our window on that is closing, given that government partners are becoming more aggressive on attribution and reporting on it. I'm going to go ahead with suspension and marking the domain as UNSAFE.

Rebel Inside was a new one for me too. Not even sure what the goal of the account could possibly be other than to highlight unrest in other areas of the world besides Russia. I've already suspended it and marked its domain as UNSAFE.

....

- Translation: the "more aggressive" "government partners" had closed Twitter's "window" of independence.
- "Other Government Agencies" ended up sharing intelligence through the FBI and FITF not just with Twitter, but with Yahoo!, Twitch, Clouldfare, LinkedIn, even Wikimedia:

#### 21 April 2022

#### 2022-29989

USA/Other:Other/Apple; USA/Other:Other/Google/Youtube; USA/Other:Other/Facebook/Meta; USA/Other:Other/Twitter; USA/Other:Other/Reddit; USA/Other:Other/Verizon Media/Yahoo; USA/Other:Other/LinkedIn; USA/Other:Other/Wikimedia

#### (U) Tearline:

(U) The tearline must be used as-is; no changes to the text/language are permitted.

\_\_\_\_\_

#### START OF TEXT

## UNCLASSIFIED

- (U) THIS INFORMATION IS PROVIDED ONLY FOR INTELLIGENCE PURPOSES IN AN EFFORT TO DEVELOP POTENTIAL INVESTIGATIVE LEADS. IT CANNOT BE USED IN CONNECTION WITH ANY FOREIGN OR DOMESTIC COURT PROCEEDINGS OR FOR ANY OTHER LEGAL, JUDICIAL, OR ADMINISTRATIVE PURPOSES.
- (U) We previously passed you information that highlighted, as part of Russian mogul Yevgeniy Prigozhin's Internet Research Agency's (IRA) attempt to denigrate French President Emmanuel Macron's campaign ahead of the late April 2022 presidential run-off election, IRA plans to expose its own troll farms in Benin, Mali, and Senegal while alleging that Macron's campaign was the entity responsible for their use and creation.
- (U) We assess that the following links are also part of the IRA's effort to amplify the same narratives:
  - <a href="https://netafrique.net/fievre-electorale-en-france-reseau-africain-de-la-propagande/">https://netafrique.net/fievre-electorale-en-france-reseau-africain-de-la-propagande/</a>
  - <a href="https://theworldnews.net/ml-news/les-habitants-du-senegal-et-du-mali-elisent-le-president-de-la-france-2022-par-hassana-diallo">https://theworldnews.net/ml-news/les-habitants-du-senegal-et-du-mali-elisent-le-president-de-la-france-2022-par-hassana-diallo</a>
  - https://bamada.net/les-habitants-du-senegal-et-du-mali-elisent-le-president-de-la-france-2022-par-hassana-diallo
  - <a href="https://senego.com/les-habitants-du-senegal-et-du-mali-elisent-le-president-de-la-france-2022-par-hassana-diallo">https://senego.com/les-habitants-du-senegal-et-du-mali-elisent-le-president-de-la-france-2022-par-hassana-diallo</a> 1411114.html
  - <a href="https://news.piaafrica.com/senego-politique/les-habitants-du-senegal-et-du-mali-elisent-le-president-de-la-france-2022-par-hassana-diallo/54fe9e8d69">https://news.piaafrica.com/senego-politique/les-habitants-du-senegal-et-du-mali-elisent-le-president-de-la-france-2022-par-hassana-diallo/54fe9e8d69</a>
  - http://mali.niooz.fr/les-habitants-du-senegal-et-du-mali-elisent-le-president-de-la-france-2022-par-hassana-diallo-43320573.shtml

CIA whistleblower John Kiriakou believes these reports found in the #TwitterFiles are written by his former agency.

• "Looks right on to me," Kiriakou says, noting that "what was cut off above [the "tearline"] was the originating CIA office and all the copied offices."

These reports are far more factually controversial than domestic counterparts

One intel report lists accounts tied to "Ukraine 'neo-Nazi' Propaganda." This includes assertions that Joe Biden helped orchestrate a coup in 2014 and "put his son on the board of Burisma."

# Suspected Russian Troll Farm: Ukraine Propaganda

Monitoring indicates that a suspected Russian troll farm is propagating disinformation on Twitter about the U.S. and Ukrainian governments to support Russian actions in Ukraine.

Mentions of "Ukraine" in English, Spanish, Russian, and Ukrainian between 18-24 Feb 2022

(U) Spike in mentions of "Ukraine" observed on 24 Feb 22

### (U) Key Findings

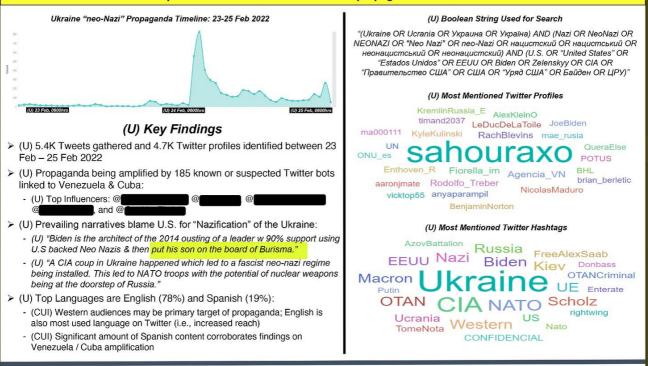
- (U) 999 Twitter profiles linked to suspected Russian troll farm; over 16K Tweets mentioning "Ukraine" in last 7 days
- (U) Top Influencer, has been mentioned in 3.9K Tweets (roughly 24% of all Tweets mentioning "Ukraine"):
  - (U) Profile created on 28 Nov 2011 (over 11 years old)
  - (U) Profile location is listed as "#Belarus"
  - (CUI) Backup profile ( ) was created on 23 Feb 22 and is listed in bio; likely a preparation for suspension / deactivation of the primary profile
- (U) Prevailing narrative emphasizes similarity between current Ukrainian government and Nazis during WWII; attributes "Nazification" to U.S. government (See sample of content)
- (U) Over 91% of all content gathered is English, which may indicate that western audiences are primary target audience
- (U) Spike in Twitter activity on 24 Feb 22 likely synchronized with Russian military advancement in Ukraine



1

# Ukraine "neo-Nazi" Propaganda Overview

The below is a combination of Boolean search filters in English, Spanish, Russian, and Ukrainian to map the network of Twitter profiles linked to Ukraine "neo-Nazi" propaganda over the last 48hrs.



Another report asserts a list of accounts accusing the "Biden administration" of "corruption" in vaccine distribution are part of a Russian influence campaign:

- (U) We also assess with high confidence that the IRA was responsible in mid-February 2022 for producing and placing in media and social media information in multiple languages, to include French, English, and Spanish, on the following two narratives:
  - That Western Europeans in Africa were not acting in the best interests of the African nations, and specifically were involved in intimidation, coercion, and blackmail in the Sahara-Sahel zone, and were not interested in helping to fight terrorism in the Sahel.
  - The Biden Administration was selling better places in the COVID-19 vaccine queue to countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and therefore, U.S. corruption was influencing the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

Often intelligence comes in the form of brief reports, followed by long lists of accounts deemed to be pro-Maduro, pro-Cuba, pro-Russia, etc: This batch contained over 1000 accounts sentenced to the digital beyond:

## Batch 7

These accounts were found to be linked to the Maduro (VEN) & Diaz-Canel (CUB) regimes **AND** propagating anti-Bolsonaro / pro-Lula Hashtags, but **HAVE NOT** been previously reported.



#### 2022-21593

USA/Other:Other/Apple; USA/Other:Other/Google/Youtube;

USA/Other:Other/Facebook; USA/Other:Other/Twitter;

USA/Other:Other/Reddit; USA/Other:Other/Verizon Media/Yahoo;

USA/Other:Other/LinkedIn; USA/Other:Other/Wikimedia;

USA/Other:Other/CloudFlare

# (U) Tearline:

(U) The tearline must be used as-is; no changes to the text/language are permitted.

\_\_\_\_\_\_

START OF TEXT

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- (U) We assess that The Tragedy of Donbas (donbasstragedy.info), a website documenting purported human rights abuses committed by Ukrainians since 2014, is directed by the Russian General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU).

UNCLASSIFIED

END OF TEXT

- Intel about the origin of these accounts might be true. But so might the information in them about neo-Nazis, or rights abuses in Donbas, etc.
- This is a difficult speech dilemma. Should the government be allowed to try to prevent Americans (and others) from seeing pro-Maduro or anti-Ukrainian accounts?
- $\bullet \quad \hbox{Often intel reports are just long lists of new spapers, tweets or YouTube videos guilty of "anti-Ukraine narratives": \\$

```
https://twitter.com/
```

UNCLASSIFIED

END OF TEXT

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#### 2 August 2022

#### 2022-51095

USA/Other:Other/Apple; USA/Other:Other/Google/Youtube;

USA/Other:Other/Meta; USA/Other:Other/Twitter;

USA/Other:Other/Reddit; USA/Other:Other/Verizon Media/Yahoo;

USA/Other:Other/LinkedIn; USA/Other:Other/Wikimedia

#### (U) Tearline:

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\_\_\_\_\_\_

(U) Russian mogul Yevgeniy Prigozhin's Internet Research Agency (IRA) was responsible for the following content, which highlighted predominantly anti-Ukraine narratives, between April and May 2022 at the following addresses on the specified platforms:

YouTube: (U)

```
https://youtube.com/shorts/
```

```
https://youtube.com/shorts/
```

# Twitter: (U)

(U) The IRA was responsible for the following posts and likely controlled the underpinning account handles:

```
https://twitter.com/
https://twitter.com/
https://twitter.com/
https://twitter.com/
https://twitter.com/
https://twitter.com/
https://twitter.com/
https://twitter.com/
```

## Privileged and Confidential

Hi team,

The questions we received are attached. I'm frankly perplexed by the requests here, which seem more like something we'd get from a congressional committee than the Bureau. There's a big discussion to be had about state-controlled media, which will be impacted by the label launch later this month — but I'm not particularly comfortable with the Bureau (and by extension the IC) demanding written answers here. What's your perspective on how best to navigate?

Thanks,

Yoel

- The line between "misinformation" and "distorting propaganda" is thin. Are we comfortable with so many companies receiving so many reports from a "more aggressive" government?
- The CIA declined to comment on the nature of its relationship to tech companies like Twitter. Watch @bariweiss, @shellenbergerMD, @lhfang, and this space for more, on issues ranging from Covid-19 to Twitter's relationship to congress, and more.