

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0908

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE  
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

December 1, 2020

Jack Dorsey  
Chief Executive Officer  
Twitter  
355 Market Street, Suite 900  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Mr. Dorsey:

Twitter has had more than 36 hours to identify, investigate, and evaluate a tweet sent by Zhao Lijian, the deputy director-general of China's Information Department, that contains a doctored image that depicts a violent act that may in turn inspire other violent acts.

It defies belief that Twitter is unaware of the image, which falsely portrays an Australian soldier holding a bloody knife to the throat of a young Afghan child, as Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison requested the image be taken down.

As such, it appears Twitter made an intentional decision not to remove the tweet or even issue a warning label. We know your company has the ability to move rapidly, as it frequently issued warning labels on tweets of prominent Americans during the election -- sometimes within minutes of a tweet being sent.

Social media platforms, including Twitter, have taken it upon themselves to regulate, moderate, and censor speech on their platforms. That is your right as a private company. However, the logic of such actions is increasingly difficult to understand in light of their inconsistency and raises questions of whether Twitter specifically should be eligible for Section 230 protections.

As Congress continues to evaluate and review our outdated technology laws, please answer the following questions:

1. When was Twitter made aware of Zhao's tweet?
2. Did Twitter conduct a review of the tweet?
  - a. If so, what was the nature of that review and why was no action taken as a result?
  - b. If not, why was the tweet not subject to review?

3. Do you stand by the process and the decision? If not, what steps have been taken to avoid such mistakes in the future?
4. Does Twitter want to operate in China in the future? And if so, has it had any conversations with relevant officials or entities in China?

The American people increasingly see mainstream social media, especially Twitter, as little more than a liberal echo chamber inclined to censor conservatives. I share their concern, especially when enemies of America are allowed to post falsified and dangerously misleading images with no consequence.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator