

College Presidents to Answer for Mishandling of Antisemitic, Violent Protests

Impact News Service

November 28, 2023 Tuesday

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Length: 215 words

Body

Washington, DC: U.S Education & The Workforce Committee has issued the following press release:

On Tuesday, December 5, at 10:15 a.m , the Committee on Education and the Workforce, chaired by Virginia Foxx (R-NC), will hold a full Committee hearing titled "Holding Campus Leaders Accountable and Confronting Antisemitism. "

"Over the past several weeks, we ' ve seen countless examples of antisemitic demonstrations on college campuses. Meanwhile, college administrators have largely stood by, allowing horrific rhetoric to fester and grow," said Chairwoman Foxx. "College and university presidents have a responsibility to foster and uphold a safe learning environment for their students and staff. Now is not a time for indecision or milquetoast statements. By holding this hearing, we are shining the spotlight on these campus leaders and demanding they take the appropriate action to stand strong against antisemitism. "

What:Full Committee hearing titled "Holding Campus Leaders Accountable and Confronting Antisemitism"

When:10:15 a.m on Tuesday, December 5, 2023

Where:2175 Rayburn House Office Building

Majority witnesses:

Dr. Claudine Gay, President, Harvard University Ms. Liz Magill, President, University of Pennsylvania Dr. Sally Kornbluth, President, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Load-Date: November 29, 2023

College Presidents to Answer for Mishandling of Antisemitic, Violent Protests

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United States/Israel/Palestine: 150 Protest in Front of DC Democrat Headquarters, Calling for Gaza Cease-Fire

Thai News Service

November 20, 2023 Monday

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Section: GENERAL NEWS

Length: 412 words

Body

Police in the nation's capital responded Wednesday night to a protest outside the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee calling for a cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war.

U.S. Capitol Police said about 150 people were "illegally and violently protesting" near the DNC headquarters building in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Washington. Members of Congress were evacuated from the building as the protest erupted.

Video posted on social media showed protesters shoving police officers and trying to grab hold of metal barricades as the officers moved in to make arrests. The videos also show officers shoving protesters. Many of the protesters were wearing black shirts that read "Cease Fire Now."

Protesters included members of If Not Now and Jewish Voice for Peace, who have organized other demonstrations in Washington.

If Not Now posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, that "police are being extremely violent."

"We are linking arms, threatening no one, and begging our politicians to support an end to the killing and the suffering in Gaza. Begging, peacefully, for a cease-fire," the group posted.

The clashes Wednesday evening are the latest example of roiling tensions over the war between Israel and Hamas.

President Joe Biden has been under increasing pressure from the Democratic Party's left flank over his support for Israel's military operation, including interruptions from protesters at his speeches. He has resisted calls for a cease-fire, instead saying there should be pauses in the fighting to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the potential extraction of hostages.

Last week, a large number of House Democrats joined nearly all Republicans in voting to censure Rep. Rashida Tlaib, the only Palestinian American in Congress, over her criticism of the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians.

Tlaib, who has family in the West Bank, came under heavy criticism after she failed to immediately condemn Hamas after the attack. She since has called out the terrorist group while also calling for a cease-fire.

United States / Israel / Palestine : 150 Protest in Front of DC Democrat Headquarters, Calling for Gaza Cease-Fire

The Metropolitan Police Department said its officers also responded to the disturbance. Officials sent an alert to congressional staffers telling them no one would be permitted to enter or exit any House office buildings.

Rep. Brad Sherman, a California Democrat, said he was evacuated from the building by police after protesters began "pepper-spraying police officers and attempting to break into the building." - VOA

Load-Date: November 17, 2023

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REP. BUCSHON SLAMS TIKTOK FOR SPREADING TERRORIST PROPAGANDA, ANTISEMITISM FOLLOWING HAMAS ATTACK ON ISRAEL

States News Service

November 20, 2023 Monday

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Byline: States News Service

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

The following information was released by the office of Indiana Rep. Larry Bucshon:

Today, U.S. Representative Larry Bucshon, M.D. (R-IN-08) joined Rep. Earl L. "Buddy" Carter (R-GA-01) and Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA-05) in a letter to TikTok CEO Shou Chew demanding action to combat the platform's spread of terrorist propaganda and antisemitic content surrounding Hamas' attack on Israel.

The letter, signed by 25 members, comes as videos on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-connected platform with the hashtag #freepalestine received 946 million views in a 30-day period. More than half of those views came from young adults ages 18-24. At the same time, a trend glorifying Osama Bin Laden and the September 1, 2001, attack on Americans garnered millions of views, demonstrating the app's influence over young users.

In the letter, the members write: "On October 7, the Palestinian terrorist organization, Hamas, brutally attacked Israel and killed more than 1,400 people. Since this terrorist attack, disinformation related to the conflict has run rampant on your platform, stoking antisemitism, support, and sympathy for Hamas... Many of the younger generations are turning to TikTok rather than search engines and other verifiable sources for their news. You have led these generations to believe that TikTok is an "unfiltered" news source."

The members continue: "This deluge of pro-terrorist content is driving hateful antisemitic rhetoric and violent protests on campuses across the country. The CCP has already co-opted your platform, and it seems TikTok and TikTok's employees are resigned to becoming a mouthpiece for antisemites, terrorists, and propaganda."

Read the full letter text [here](#).

Congressman Larry Bucshon, M.D. represents Indiana's 8th Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives and is a senior member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

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Load-Date: November 28, 2023

REP. BUCSHON SLAMS TIKTOK FOR SPREADING TERRORIST PROPAGANDA, ANTISEMITISM
FOLLOWING HAMAS ATTACK ON ISRAEL

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Balderson, Carter, Rodgers Condemn TikTok for Spreading Terrorist Propaganda and Antisemitism

Targeted News Service

November 28, 2023 Tuesday 9:20 AM EST

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Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

Rep. Troy Balderson, R-Ohio, issued the following news release on Nov. 27, 2023:

U.S. Representatives Troy Balderson (R-OH), Earl L. "Buddy" Carter (R-GA), and Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) sent a letter to TikTok CEO Shou Chew demanding action to combat the platform's spread of terrorist propaganda and antisemitic content surrounding Hamas's unprovoked terrorist attack on Israel.

The letter, signed by 25 members, comes as videos on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-connected platform with the hashtag #freepalestine received 946 million views in a 30-day period. More than half of those views came from young adults ages 18-24. At the same time, a trend glorifying Osama bin Laden and the September 11, 2001, attack on Americans garnered millions of views, demonstrating the app's influence over young users.

Shou Chew appeared before the Energy and Commerce Committee earlier this year to discuss his company's consumer privacy and data security practices. At the hearing, Balderson pressed the TikTok CEO on the potential harm the app poses for young Americans and how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) could exploit the TikTok's data collection for nefarious purposes.

In the letter, the members write: "On October 7, the Palestinian terrorist organization, Hamas, brutally attacked Israel and killed more than 1,400 people. Since this terrorist attack, disinformation related to the conflict has run rampant on your platform, stoking antisemitism, support, and sympathy for Hamas... Many of the younger generations are turning to TikTok rather than search engines and other verifiable sources for their news. You have led these generations to believe that TikTok is an 'unfiltered' news source.

The members continue: "This deluge of pro-terrorist content is driving hateful antisemitic rhetoric and violent protests on campuses across the country. The CCP has already co-opted your platform, and it seems TikTok and TikTok's employees are resigned to becoming a mouthpiece for antisemites, terrorists, and propaganda."

The letter was signed by Representatives John Joyce (R-PA), Dan Crenshaw (R-TX), Kat Cammack (R-FL), Larry Bucshon, M.D. (R-IN), Tim Walberg (R-MI), Gus M. Bilirakis (R-FL), Rick W. Allen (R-GA), Gary Palmer (R-AL), Robert E. Latta (R-OH), Greg Pence (R-IN), Brett Guthrie (R-KY), Jeff Duncan (R-SC), Debbie Lesko (R-AZ),

Balderson, Carter, Rodgers Condemn TikTok for Spreading Terrorist Propaganda and Antisemitism

Randy K. Weber (R-TX), Russ Fulcher (R-ID), Richard Hudson (R-NC), Mariannette Miller-Meeke, M.D. (R-IA), Bill Johnson (R-OH), Neal P. Dunn, M.D. (R-FL), August Pfluger (R-TX), Diana Harshbarger (R-TN), and John Curtis (R-UT).

* * *

November 20, 2023

To: Shou Zi Chew, Chief Executive Officer, TikTok Inc., 5800 Bristol Parkway, Culver City, California 90230

Dear Mr. Chew:

We write to you with deep concerns over the rise of terrorist and antisemitic content on your platform. On October 7, the Palestinian terrorist organization, Hamas, brutally attacked Israel and killed more than 1,400 people. Since this terrorist attack, disinformation related to the conflict has run rampant on your platform, stoking antisemitism, support, and sympathy for Hamas.¹

According to TikTok's own "Creative Center," the hashtag "#freepalestine" received 946 million views in the last 30 days, while "#standwithIsrael" received only 55 million.² Most concerning, 58 percent of those viewing the #freepalestine hashtag are within the 18 to 24 age group.³ Disturbingly, millions of TikTok users have recently viewed videos glorifying Osama Bin Laden's "Letter to America," which attempts to justify his horrific murder of 3,000 Americans in the September 11, 2001, attacks while also perpetuating "the antisemitic trope claiming the Jews 'control your policies, media and economy.'"⁴ Many of the younger generations are turning to TikTok rather than search engines and other verifiable sources for their news.⁵ You have led these generations to believe that TikTok is an "unfiltered" news source.⁶

TikTok's connection to parent company ByteDance, which is headquartered in the People's Republic of China (PRC), raises significant national security concerns.⁷ All Chinese tech companies are required to comply with the PRC's "National Intelligence Law of 2017," which allows Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials to access user data without any mechanism of due process.⁸ In addition, the CCP openly co-opts "private" Chinese companies to further CCP priorities, as demonstrated with the removal of Israel's name from Baidu Maps and Alibaba-backed Amap.⁹

Earlier this year, while testifying before the Committee on Energy and Commerce, you stated that the PRC did not have control over TikTok.¹⁰ However, former TikTok employees reported that the PRC has access to American user data and is closely involved in decision-making and product development.¹¹ In your own testimony, you stated that you are in regular communication with Liang Rubo, the CEO of ByteDance.¹² Since the beginning of 2023, several high-level executives from the CCP-controlled ByteDance transferred into key positions at TikTok. These reports come from internal TikTok employees who believe that ByteDance has more control of TikTok than TikTok publicly acknowledges.¹³ This control, alongside troubling reports of privacy and data security breaches, such as monitoring American journalists' locations,¹⁴ proves that the CCP is using TikTok as a surveillance and manipulation tool. Given that roughly half of TikTok's U.S. user base is under 25 years old, American youth are being exposed to extremely violent and disturbing images and videos.¹⁵ According to a Harvard/Harris poll, 51 percent of those polled between 18 to 24 believe Hamas was justified in its attack on October 7.¹⁶ This deluge of pro-Hamas content is driving hateful antisemitic rhetoric and violent protests on campuses across the country.¹⁷ The CCP has already co-opted your platform, and it seems TikTok and TikTok's employees are resigned to becoming a mouthpiece for antisemites, terrorists, and propaganda.

We ask that you provide us with the following information by December 4, 2023:

1. What number of employees at TikTok were formerly employed by ByteDance?
2. Does the PRC have any involvement or ability to censor or amplify content on TikTok?
3. What steps is TikTok taking to increase transparency about its data practices and content moderation policies?

4. Prior to, or immediately after, an event like the October 7 terrorist attack on Israel, does TikTok have an internal discussion about the types of content or viewpoints that may arise and require additional supervision or suppression?
- a. If so, who participates in those meetings?
5. How does TikTok's process for curating the "For You" page differ from the type of content a user can see when searching out specific content?
6. Has TikTok's algorithm amplified content and sentiments calling for the elimination of the Jewish State?
7. What factors and third-party sites does TikTok use to determine what is and is not misinformation or disinformation about the Israel-Hamas conflict?
8. What metric tools (i.e., hashtags) is TikTok using to determine the interactions with posts related to the conflict?
9. Does TikTok manipulate the TikTok Creative Center's "hashtag-search" data before the data is searchable by users?
10. What is TikTok doing to counter the creation of bots worldwide who are intentionally interacting with pro-Hamas content?
11. What algorithmic capabilities is TikTok using to promote and/or suppress content related to the Israel-Hamas conflict?
12. How much money has TikTok paid out of its TikTok Creator Fund to creators promoting antisemitic content?
13. How does TikTok age-restrict certain content?
- a. If content is not allowed on the "For You" page, does TikTok allow this content to be searchable?
- b. What are the age group separations for the different levels of content restriction? Thank you for your attention to this matter.

* * *

Footnotes:

1/ Amy Schumer, Ariel Rebecca Martin, et al., Dear TikTok, <https://www.deartiktok.com/>.

2/ TikTok Creative Center, TikTok (accessed Nov. 8, 2023), <https://ads.tiktok.com/business/creativecenter/hashtag/freepalestine/pc/en?period=30> (term #freepalestine searched on Nov. 8, 2023); TikTok Creative Center, TikTok (accessed Nov. 8, 2023), <https://ads.tiktok.com/business/creativecenter/hashtag/standwithisrael/pc/en?period=30> (term #standwithisrael search on Nov. 8, 2023).

3/ TikTok Creative Center, supra note 2 at #freepalestine.

4/ Joseph A. Wulfsohn, Osama bin Laden's infamous 'Letter to America' after 9/11 promoted by TikTok influencers, goes viral, Fox News (November 16, 2023), <https://www.foxnews.com/media/osama-bin-ladens-infamous-letter-america-9-11-promoted-tiktok-influencers-goes-viral>.

5/ Kalley Huang, For Gen Z, TikTok Is the New Search Engine, The New York Times (Sep. 16, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/16/technology/gen-z-tiktok-search-engine.html>.

6/ Taylor Lorenz, Why TikTok videos on the Israel-Hamas war have drawn billions of views, The Washington Post (Oct. 10, 2023), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2023/10/10/tiktok-hamas-israel-war-videos/>.

Balderson, Carter, Rodgers Condemn TikTok for Spreading Terrorist Propaganda and Antisemitism

7/ Eric Tucker, FBI director raises national security concerns about TikTok, Association Press (Dec. 2, 2022), <https://apnews.com/article/technology-china-united-states-national-security-government-and-politics-ac5c29cafaa1fc6bee990ed7e1fe5afc>.

8/ PRC National Intelligence Law (as amended in 2018), China Law Translate (April 27, 2018), <https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/national-intelligence-law-of-the-p-r-c-2017/>.

9/ Simone McCarthy, As Gaza conflict rages, online maps from Chinese companies are missing Israel's name, CNN.com (Nov. 2, 2023), <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/02/china/china-maps-baidu-amap-israel-intl-hnk/index.html>.

10/ TikTok: How Congress Can Safeguard American Data Privacy and Protect Children from Online Harms, Hearing before the H. Comm. on Energy and Commerce, 118th Cong. (March 23, 2023) (statement of Shou Zi Chew, TikTok CEO), <https://energycommerce.house.gov/events/full-committee-hearing-tik-tok-how-congress-can-safeguard-american-data-privacy-and-protect-children-from-online-harms>.

11/ Salvador Rodriguez, TikTok insiders say social media company is tightly controlled by Chinese parent ByteDance, CNBC (June 25, 2021), <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/06/25/tiktok-insiders-say-chinese-parent-bytedance-in-control.html>.

12 TikTok, *supra* note 9.

13/ Georgia Wells, TikTok Employees Say Executive Moves to U.S. Show China Parent's Influence, The Wall Street Journal (Sep. 27, 2023), https://www.wsj.com/tech/tiktok-employees-say-executive-moves-to-u-s-show-china-parents-influence-ef5ff21f?st=nh05z4dd54nlni9&reflink=article_imessage_share.

14/ Emily Baker-White, EXCLUSIVE: TikTok Spied on Forbes Journalists, Forbes (December 22, 2022), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/emilybaker-white/2022/12/22/tiktok-tracks-forbes-journalists-bytedance/?sh=b821f1f7da57>.

15/ Drew Harwell and Taylor Lorenz, Israel-Gaza war sparks debate over TikTok's role in setting public opinion, The Washington Post (Nov. 2, 2023), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2023/11/02/tiktok-israel-hamas-video-brainwash/>.

16/ Harvard Caps Harris Poll, (Oct. 19, 2023) https://harvardharrispoll.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/HHP_Oct23_KeyResults.pdf.

17/ Hanna Panreck, College groups across U.S. stage 'walkout' protesting U.S. military funding to Israel, Fox News (Oct. 25, 2023), <https://www.foxnews.com/media/college-groups-across-u-s-stage-walkout-protesting-u-s-military-funding-israel>.

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Original text here: <https://balderson.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=2574>

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