

March 14, 2020

Mark Zuckerberg  
Chief Executive Officer  
META  
1 Hacker Way  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg,

Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine has killed hundreds of innocent people – many of them woman and children. This senseless terror represents a blatant violation of international law and poses an unprecedented threat to international security and stability, yet Russian state-controlled media such as *Russia Today* and *Sputnik News* continue to operate unimpeded on your platforms. As the media arm of Vladimir Putin spinning his preferred narrative around the world, these outlets have a direct role in the ongoing violence and spread of disinformation. I urge you to disarm Putin and immediately ban these outlets from your platforms, as so many other responsible companies have done.

Make no mistake. The Kremlin views social media and the control of information as a critical piece in its information warfare around the world. This past January, the U.S. Department of State released a report detailing the role of *Russia Today* and *Sputnik News* as critical elements in Russia's disinformation and propaganda ecosystem, making clear that both outlets amplify content generated by the Kremlin and Russian intelligence to weaponize social media and promote disinformation to change public opinions about Ukraine in the United States and around the world. This was made clear in the lead-up to the Ukrainian invasion, when these outlets explicitly sold Putin's justification for military action by falsely describing the Ukrainian government and its people as fascists and Nazis.

These are just some of the ways that social media platforms can have an outsized role in giving voice to bad actors like Vladimir Putin. Social media platforms need to remove Russian state-controlled media accounts and their amplifiers—whether they are human or bots—that are actively inciting violence against Ukraine. Other companies like YouTube have already banned Russian state-funded media channels from their platforms, and yet you have not yet followed suit.

Meta has taken some steps to restrict access to Russian state-controlled media, but it is too little and too late. For example, your company has restricted access to Russian outlets in Europe and demoted some content, but these outlets remain active in the U.S. despite repeatedly and unabashedly violating your platforms' rules. As of today, they continue to spread disinformation across your platforms. The Ukrainian people are suffering enough from Russia's

mortar attacks and air strikes; surely, they do not need the added indignity of the harmful myths perpetuated on your platforms in service of Putin's war.

I urge you to remove *Russia Today*, *Sputnik News*, and other Russian-controlled media outlets from your platforms immediately to prevent the further spread of disinformation. There is no justifiable reason to keep giving Vladimir Putin a voice on Facebook, Instagram, and your other platforms.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

U.S. Senator Joe Manchin III