


Twitter whistleblower tells Congress there were Chinese, Indian agents on company's payroll

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By John Bender

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A former Twitter employee and cybersecurity expert testified in front of Congress this week, telling the panel the social media company employed Chinese and Indian agents at one time, and compromised user data in many ways.

Peiter “Mudge” Zatkan worked for Twitter from November 2020 to January 2022 as head of information security for the company as it worked to recover from a major July 2020 cybersecurity [attack](#).

Zatkan was terminated in what the company said was a reorganization, but the [Wall Street Journal](#) reported last week that the Twitter reached a \$7 million settlement with Zatkan in June and he signed a non-disclosure agreement that prohibited him from discussing the company’s security issues with anyone except for congressional hearings or federal whistleblower complaints.

In his [testimony](#) this week before the House Judiciary Committee, Zatkan told the panel Twitter had sub-standard security measures in place and that the company had misrepresented itself in its agreement to sell to Elon Musk.

He also told the Committee that Twitter had a Chinese intelligence agent on its payroll at one time, as well as, he believes, Indian agents. Zatzko suggests Twitter may have made user data available to those two governments.

“I am here today because Twitter leadership is misleading the public, lawmakers, regulators and even its own board of directors,” he said in his congressional testimony. “They don’t know what data they have, where it lives and where it came from and so, unsurprisingly, they can’t protect it,” he added. “It doesn’t matter who has keys if there are no locks. Twitter leadership ignored its engineers,” Zatzko asserted, saying their “executive incentives led them to prioritize profit over security.”

A majority of shareholders voted this week to go forward with the sale of the company to Musk, who has attempted to walk away from the deal. The two sides will meet in federal court next month.