

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

TWITTER, INC.,

Plaintiff,

v.

WILLIAM P. BARR, ET AL.,

Defendants.

Case No. 14-cv-04480-YGR

**ORDER GRANTING GOVERNMENT'S
MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT;
DENYING TWITTER'S CROSS-MOTION FOR
SUMMARY JUDGMENT**

DKT. NOS. 309, 311

This long-pending case has morphed through myriad iterations and legislative changes. That plaintiff has continued to pursue the action merely underscores the tension between the First Amendment and national security and the future impact of the proceedings. The Court now addresses the cross-motions of plaintiff Twitter, Inc. ("Twitter") and defendants William P. Barr, *et al.* ("the Government") for summary judgment. (Dkt. Nos. 309, 311.) The Court having considered the parties' briefing in support of and in opposition to the cross-motions, the admissible evidence¹ (including evidence presented *in camera*²), and the prior proceedings and

¹ Twitter requests judicial notice of publicly available reports prepared by the Director of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Legislative Affairs (Dkt. No. 315) in support of Twitter's cross-motion and opposition. In connection with its reply briefing, Twitter also filed a supplemental request for judicial notice of transparency reports published by five companies (Adobe, Cisco, Automattic, Wickr, and Nest) and that such reports include statements that they companies have received zero national security process requests during one or more reporting periods. (Dkt. No. 327.) The Government did not oppose either request. The Court finds that it is proper to take judicial notice of the fact of these reports and their contents, not the truth of any statements therein. The requests for judicial notice are **GRANTED**.

² Twitter argues that the Government's motion should be denied for the further reason that it needs access to the Classified Tabb Declaration in order to meaningfully counter the Government's claim that the restrictions it has imposed on the Draft Transparency Report pass constitutional muster. The Court finds that the classified declaration of EAD Tabb cannot be disclosed to counsel for Twitter based upon the national security concerns it raises, despite counsel's clearance approval. Thus, Twitter's motion for summary judgment on these alternative grounds, as well as its motion for access of cleared counsel, are **DENIED**.

1 arguments in this matter, and for the reasons stated herein, **ORDERS** that the Government’s motion
 2 for summary judgment is **GRANTED** and Twitter’s cross-motion for summary judgment is **DENIED**.

3 **I. BACKGROUND**

4 **A. Allegations of the Operative Complaint**

5 Twitter’s Second Amended Complaint (Dkt. No. 114, “SAC”) is the operative pleading in
 6 this action. The SAC seeks declaratory and injunctive relief based upon the Government’s alleged
 7 “prohibitions on [Twitter’s] speech in violation of the First Amendment,” specifically the
 8 Government’s prohibition on publishing its Draft Transparency Report “describing the *amount* of
 9 national security legal process³ it received, if any for the period July 1 to December 31, 2013.”
 10 (SAC ¶ 1, 4, emphasis in original.) Twitter further alleges that it “seeks to disclose that it
 11 received ‘zero’ FISA orders, or ‘zero’ of a specific *kind* of FISA order, for that period, if either of
 12 those circumstances is true.” (*Id.* ¶ 4, emphasis in original.) More particularly, Twitter alleges that
 13 it seeks to publish a report disclosing the following categories of quantitative data to its users for
 14 the relevant period:

- 15 a. The number of NSLs and FISA orders Twitter received, if any, in actual
 16 aggregate numbers (including “zero,” to the extent that that number was
 applicable to an aggregate number of NSLs or FISA orders or to specific *kinds* of
 FISA orders that Twitter may have received);
- 17 b. The number of NSLs and FISA orders received, if any, reported
 separately, in ranges of one hundred, beginning with 1–99;
- 18 c. The combined number of NSLs and FISA orders received, if any, in
 ranges of twenty-five, beginning with 1–24;
- 19 d. A comparison of Twitter’s proposed (i.e., smaller) ranges with those
 authorized by the [Government in its earlier communication from then-Deputy
 Attorney General James M. Cole to the General Counsels for Facebook, Google,
 20 LinkedIn, Microsoft and Yahoo!, referred to as the] DAG Letter;
- 21 e. A comparison of the aggregate numbers of NSLs and FISA orders
 received, if any, by Twitter and the five providers to whom the DAG Letter was
 22 addressed; and
- 23 f. A descriptive statement about Twitter’s exposure to national security
 surveillance, if any, to express the overall degree of government surveillance it is
 24 or may be subject to.

(*Id.* ¶ 56, emphasis in original.)

25 The Government has prohibited publication of that Draft Transparency Report since
 26

27 ³ Those national security legal process requests include national security letters (“NSLs”)
 28 and other orders under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (“FISA”).

1 Twitter submitted it for review on April 1, 2014, asserting that certain portions of the report
 2 contained classified information. (*Id.* ¶¶ 55, 57, 58.) In two counts of the SAC, Twitter alleges
 3 that the Government has classified information in the Draft Transparency Report improperly and
 4 therefore put unlawful prior restraints on its speech in violation of the First Amendment. Twitter
 5 alleges that these actions are both violations of the First Amendment and “final agency action”
 6 subject to challenge under the Administrative Procedure Act, 5 U.S.C. §§ 701 *et seq.* (SAC at ¶¶
 7 71-86 and 87-91.)⁴

8 **B. Procedural History**

9 The lengthy procedural history of this case is detailed in the Court’s prior orders. (*See*
 10 October 14, 2015 Order Denying Motion to Dismiss as Moot (Dkt. No. 85); May 2, 2016 Order
 11 Granting In Part and Denying In Part Motion to Dismiss Amended Complaint (Dkt. No. 113); July
 12 6, 2017 Order Denying Government’s Motion for Summary Judgment Without Prejudice;
 13 Granting Twitter’s Motion for Order Directing Defendants to Expedite Security Clearance (Dkt.
 14 No. 172)); November 27, 2017 Order Denying Motion for Reconsideration (Dkt. No. 186). The
 15 Court sets forth herein an abbreviated summary of the history as relevant to the instant motions.

16 The Government previously moved for summary judgment (Dkt. No. 145) based upon a
 17 classified and a redacted declaration of Michael Steinbach, Executive Assistant Director (“EAD”)
 18 of the National Security Branch of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”). (*See* Notice of
 19 Lodging of Classified Declaration of Michael Steinbach for *In Camera, Ex Parte* Review, Dkt.
 20 No. 144.) The Court reviewed the Classified Steinbach Declaration *in camera* and, based upon
 21 that review, denied the Government’s motion without prejudice. The Court found that, under the
 22 applicable constitutional standards, the Classified Steinbach declaration was inadequate to meet
 23 the Government’s burden to overcome the strong presumption of unconstitutionality of its content-
 24 based prior restrictions on Twitter’s speech. (Dkt. No. 172 at 17-18.) The Court found:

25 The Government’s restrictions on Twitter’s speech are content-based prior

26 _____
 27 ⁴ Twitter alleges a third count seeking injunctive relief barring Government prosecution
 28 under the Espionage Act, 18 U.S.C. § 793(d) should Twitter disclose information in the Draft
 Transparency Report. (SAC ¶¶ 92-96.)

1 restraints subject to the highest level of scrutiny under the First Amendment. The
2 restrictions are not narrowly tailored to prohibit only speech that would pose a
3 clear and present danger or imminent harm to national security. The Government
4 argues that the limitations imposed on Twitter are necessary because disclosure of
5 data concerning the number and type of national security legal process that it
6 received in a time period would impair national security interests and is properly
7 classified. However, the Government has not presented evidence, beyond a
8 generalized explanation, to demonstrate that disclosure of the information in the
9 Draft Transparency Report would present such a grave and serious threat of
10 damage to national security as to meet the applicable strict scrutiny standard.

11 (*Id.* at 2.) The Court denied the motion without prejudice, offering the Government leave to
12 submit additional evidence to support its restrictions. (*See, e.g.*, Dkt. No. 182, Transcript of Case
13 Management Conference, at 4:3-23.) The Government declined to do so. (*Id.*)

14 Following a formal request by Twitter (Dkt. No. 250), the Court issued an Order to Show
15 Cause (“OSC”) why the Classified Steinbach Declaration should not be disclosed to Twitter’s
16 counsel who had been granted a security clearance. (Dkt. No. 261.) The Government filed a
17 response to the OSC which included a motion to dismiss the action based on an assertion of the
18 state secrets privilege. (Dkt. No. 281.) In connection with that response, the Government
19 submitted *in camera* the Classified Declaration of Acting EAD Michael C. McGarrity. (*See* Dkt.
20 No. 282, Notice of Lodging of Classified Declaration of Michael C. McGarrity for *Ex Parte In*
21 *Camera* Review.) Drafted in support of the Government’s assertion of the state secrets privilege,
22 the Classified Declaration of EAD McGarrity provided a more complete explanation and
23 justification of the Government’s basis for restricting the information that may be published in the
24 Draft Transparency Report, and the grave and imminent harm that could reasonably be expected to
25 arise from its disclosure, in far greater detail than the Government provided previously.

26 After considering McGarrity’s declaration provided *in camera*, the Court, on June 21,
27 2019, issued an OSC indicating it was inclined to reconsider its prior order denying the
28 Government’s summary judgment motion (Dkt. No. 301), stating:

The Court is inclined to find that classified McGarrity Declaration meets the
Government’s burden under strict scrutiny to justify classification and restrict
disclosure of information in the Draft Transparency Report, based upon a
reasonable expectation that its disclosure would pose grave or imminent harm to
national security, and that no more narrow tailoring of the restrictions can be
made. Further, the Court is inclined to conclude that the classified McGarrity
Declaration cannot be disclosed to counsel for Twitter based upon the national
security concerns it raises.

1 (*Id.* at 2.) On August 23, 2019, the parties jointly responded to the June 21, 2019 Order
 2 to Show Cause and asked that the classified McGarrity declaration not be used to inform
 3 the Court’s reconsideration of the Government’s motion for summary judgment. Instead,
 4 the Government requested to submit a new summary judgment motion supported by a
 5 new declaration, which would incorporate aspects of the information proffered in the
 6 Classified McGarrity Declaration germane to the merits of the case. (Dkt. No. 306 at 2–
 7 3.) The Court granted the Government’s request as well as Twitter’s request to file a
 8 cross-motion for summary judgment.

9 C. The Instant Cross-Motions

10 The Government filed its motion seeking summary judgment on all claims in Twitter’s
 11 SAC on the grounds that the newly submitted classified and unclassified declarations of Jay S.
 12 Tabb, Jr., EAD of the National Security Branch of the FBI to establish that disclosure of the data
 13 contained in Twitter’s 2014 Draft Transparency Report reasonably could be expected to result in
 14 national security harms such that the Government’s restrictions on the report are constitutionally
 15 valid. Twitter’s cross-motion contests the Government’s arguments and seeks summary judgment
 16 on the grounds that: (1) the Government has not satisfied strict scrutiny under the *Pentagon*
 17 *Papers*⁵ standard; (2) the Government’s decision to restrict the disclosures in Twitter’s 2014 Draft
 18 Transparency Report lacked any of the procedural safeguards required by *Freedman v. Maryland*,
 19 380 U.S. 51 (1965); and (3) Twitter’s cleared counsel⁶ must be given access to the classified
 20 version of the Tabb Declaration in order for it to respond fully to the Government’s arguments.

21 II. LEGAL STANDARD

22 Summary judgment is appropriate when “there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact
 23 and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(a). “[W]hen
 24 parties submit cross-motions for summary judgment, each motion must be considered on its own
 25

26 ⁵ *N.Y. Times Co. v. United States*, 403 U.S. 713 (1971), commonly referred to as the
 27 *Pentagon Papers* case.

28 ⁶ Twitter’s lead counsel Lee H. Rubin has had his security clearance “favorably adjudicated” by the FBI as of September 17, 2018. (Dkt. No. 250-1, Rubin Decl. Exh. A.)

1 merits.” *Fair Hous. Council of Riverside Cty., Inc. v. Riverside Two*, 249 F.3d 1132, 1136 (9th
2 Cir. 2001) (alteration and internal quotation marks omitted). Thus, “[t]he court must rule on each
3 party’s motion on an individual and separate basis, determining, for each side, whether a judgment
4 may be entered in accordance with the Rule 56 standard.” *Id.* (quoting Wright, *et al.*, FEDERAL
5 PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE § 2720, at 335–36 (3d ed. 1998)). However, the court must consider
6 the evidence proffered by both sets of motions before ruling on either one. *Riverside Two*, 249
7 F.3d at 1135–36; *Johnson v. Poway Unified Sch. Dist.*, 658 F.3d 954, 960 (9th Cir. 2011)
8 (“Because the parties filed cross-motions for summary judgment, we consider each party’s
9 evidence to evaluate whether summary judgment was appropriate.”) “[C]redibility
10 determinations, the weighing of the evidence, and the drawing of legitimate inferences from facts
11 are jury functions, not those of a judge.” *George v. Edholm*, 752 F.3d 1206, 1214 (9th Cir.
12 2014) (alteration in original) (quotation omitted).

13 As a general matter, where the party moving for summary judgment would bear the burden
14 of proof at trial, that moving party bears the initial burden of proof at summary judgment as to
15 each material fact to be established in the complaint and must show that no reasonable jury could
16 find other than for the moving party. *See S. California Gas Co. v. City of Santa Ana*, 336 F.3d
17 885, 888 (9th Cir. 2003) (*citing* William W Schwarzer, *et al.*, CALIFORNIA PRACTICE GUIDE:
18 FEDERAL CIVIL PROCEDURE BEFORE TRIAL (Rutter Group) § 14:124–127 (2001)). Where the
19 moving party would not bear the burden at trial, the motion need only specify the basis for
20 summary judgment and identify those portions of the record, if any, which it believes demonstrate
21 the absence of a genuine issue of material fact on some essential element of the claims. *Celotex*
22 *Corp. v. Catrett*, 477 U.S. 317, 323, (1986). The burden then shifts to the opposing party to
23 establish the existence of material disputes of fact that may affect the outcome of the case under
24 the governing substantive law. *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 248 (1986).

25 In the context of a First Amendment challenge, however, the ultimate burdens of proof are
26 placed upon the Government. When the Government restricts speech, it bears the burden of
27 proving the constitutionality of its actions. *United States v. Playboy Entm’t Grp., Inc.*, 529 U.S.
28 803, 816–17 (2000) (*citing Greater New Orleans Broadcasting Assn., Inc. v. United States*, 527

1 U.S. 173, 183 (1999); *Reno v. American Civil Liberties Union*, 521 U.S. 844, 879 (1997)). “When
 2 the Government seeks to restrict speech based on its content, the usual presumption of
 3 constitutionality afforded [to its actions] is reversed.” *Playboy*, 529 U.S. at 816–17. Because
 4 “[c]ontent-based regulations are presumptively invalid,” *R.A.V. v. St. Paul*, 505 U.S. 377, 382
 5 (1992), “the Government bears the burden to rebut that presumption.” *Playboy*, 529 U.S. at 817.
 6 “When First Amendment compliance is the point to be proved, the risk of nonpersuasion—
 7 operative in all trials—must rest with the Government, not with the citizen.” *Id.* at 818 (internal
 8 citation omitted).

9 **III. DISCUSSION**

10 **A. Strict Scrutiny Standard**

11 **1. Strict Scrutiny Applies**

12 The Government argues that it is entitled to summary judgment on several grounds. First,
 13 it argues that, although it disagrees with the Court on the applicable constitutional standard, it
 14 nevertheless has met the strict scrutiny standard since its restrictions on Twitter’s speech are
 15 sufficiently “narrowly tailored to serve a compelling state interest” (quoting *In re NSL*, 863 F.3d
 16 1110, 1123 (9th Cir. 2017) and *Reed v. Town of Gilbert*, 135 S.Ct. 2218, 2226 (2015)). Twitter
 17 counters that this Court previously decided the applicable standard is strict scrutiny, and the
 18 Government has not met it.

19 In denying the Government’s original motion for summary judgment, the Court
 20 determined that the restrictions on Twitter’s speech are subject to strict scrutiny as a content-based
 21 restriction and a prior restraint. (Dkt. No. 172 at 15, citing numerous cases.) That is the law of the
 22 case and the Government provides no substantive reason to revisit that determination.

23 **2. The Declarations In the Record Satisfy the Government’s Substantive 24 Burden Under Strict Scrutiny**

25 The Court applies the strict scrutiny standard to the challenged restrictions and finds that
 26 the Government’s restrictions on the information Twitter may report are, in fact, narrowly tailored
 27 in substance. The Court bases its decision on the *totality* of the evidence provided in this case,
 28 including the classified declarations of EAD Steinbach, Acting EAD McGarrity and EAD Tabb.

1 Each built on the same basis for the Government’s position, and each bring a perspective to the
 2 Court’s analysis to resolve this action. The Court sees no reason to disregard any of the
 3 previously submitted declarations. The declarations explain the gravity of the risks inherent in
 4 disclosure of the information that the Government has prohibited Twitter from stating in its Draft
 5 Transparency Report, including a sufficiently specific explanation of the reasons disclosure of
 6 mere aggregate numbers, even years after the relevant time period in the Draft Transparency
 7 Report, could be expected to give rise to grave or imminent harm to the national security. The
 8 Court finds that the declarations contain sufficient factual detail to justify the Government’s
 9 classification of the aggregate information in Twitter’s 2014 Draft Transparency Report on the
 10 grounds that the information would be likely to lead to grave or imminent harm to the national
 11 security, and that no more narrow tailoring of the restrictions can be made.

12 **B. *Freedman’s* Procedural Safeguards**

13 Twitter argues that, in the alternative, it is entitled to summary judgment because the
 14 procedures under which portions of its 2014 Draft Transparency Report were classified and
 15 restricted do not satisfy the procedural safeguards required for such a prior restraint of speech
 16 under *Freedman v. Maryland* and its progeny. More specifically, Twitter argues that *Freedman*
 17 requires an expedited, government-initiated judicial review of a restraint on aggregate reporting,
 18 and that such requirements are not met by the classification guidelines that the Government
 19 applied nor the “statutory authority under which that classification review was conducted.”
 20 (Twitter’s Cross-Motion for Summary Judgment, Dkt. No. 311, at 2:12-13, citing 50 U.S.C. §
 21 1874(c)).⁷

22 The Government counters on two grounds. First, it contends that Twitter has not alleged a
 23 challenge under *Freedman* in the SAC. Further, the Government argues the procedural
 24

25 ⁷ Twitter’s characterization of the section 1874(c) is incorrect. The Government’s
 26 classification authority under Executive Order 13526 is completely distinct from its authority
 27 under section 1874(c) to allow persons subject to nondisclosure provisions to report legal process
 28 and orders received in a different manner than the numerical bands scheme set forth in section
 1874(a) and (b). *See* 50 U.S.C. § 1874(c) (“Nothing in this section prohibits the Government and
 any person from jointly agreeing to the publication of information referred to in this subsection in
 a time, form, or manner other than as described in this section.”).

1 protections required by *Freedman* do not apply to its decision that the information in the Draft
 2 Transparency Report was national security information properly classified under Executive Order
 3 13526.

4 As a general matter, and as the Court previously determined, even if a particular content-
 5 based restriction is permitted under the strict scrutiny standard, “the government does not have
 6 unfettered freedom to implement such a restriction through ‘a system of prior administrative
 7 restraints.’” *In re NSL*, 863 F.3d at 1122 (citing *Bantam Books, Inc. v. Sullivan*, 372 U.S. 58, 70,
 8 83 (1963)). The government’s restrictions must have “narrow, objective, and definite standards to
 9 guide” them, as well as procedural safeguards to reduce the dangers of excessive restriction. *See*
 10 *Thomas v. Chi. Park Dist.*, 534 U.S. 316, 321 (2002) (citing *Freedman*, 380 U.S. at 58–60). With
 11 respect to such a system of prior restraints, *Freedman* requires that: (1) any restraint imposed prior
 12 to judicial review must be limited to “a specified brief period”; (2) any further restraint prior to a
 13 final judicial determination must be limited to “the shortest fixed period compatible with sound
 14 judicial resolution”; and (3) the burden of going to court to suppress speech and the burden of
 15 proof in court must be placed on the government. *See Freedman*, 380 U.S. at 58–59; *FW/PBS, Inc.*
 16 *v. City of Dallas*, 493 U.S. 215, 227 (1990)); *Thomas v. Chicago Park District*, 534 U.S. 316, 321
 17 (2002); *John Doe, Inc. v. Mukasey*, 549 F.3d 861, 871 (2d Cir. 2008), *as modified* (Mar. 26, 2009).

18 Thus, in *In re Nat'l Sec. Letter*, the Ninth Circuit considered whether nondisclosure
 19 requirements as to specific national security process requests were constitutional. The *In re Nat'l*
 20 *Sec. Letter* case was a facial challenge to the NSL statutes.⁸ The Ninth Circuit held that the NSL
 21 law met all the procedural safeguard requirements of *Freedman* because the 2015 revisions
 22 implemented a system of judicial review of a nondisclosure decision on an expedited basis, and
 23 required the government to initiate the review and carry the burden of substantiating the
 24 nondisclosure at the request of a contesting party. *In re Nat'l Sec. Letter*, 863 F.3d at 1129-31
 25 (questioning whether *Freedman* applied to individuals who did not “intend to speak” before
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27
 28 ⁸ The Ninth Circuit held that plaintiffs were raising a facial challenge to the NSL law, rather than an as-applied challenge to a particular application of the law to their speech. *Id.* at 1121.

1 receiving the government’s prohibition, but nevertheless finding procedural protections satisfied
2 *Freedman*).

3 Here, Twitter’s SAC does not allege a challenge, facial or otherwise, based upon the
4 principles in *Freedman*. Count 1 of the SAC alleges that the information in the Draft
5 Transparency Report was not properly classified under Executive Order No. 13526, and that the
6 Government cannot demonstrate that the information poses a threat to national security. (SAC ¶¶
7 76, 79.) Count 2 of the SAC alleges that the Government’s decision regarding the Draft
8 Transparency Report was a “final agency action” that violated the First Amendment. Nowhere in
9 the SAC does Twitter seek declaratory or injunctive relief requiring the Government to comply
10 with any procedural safeguards, such as temporal limitations on prohibition orders, or
11 government-initiated judicial review, required by *Freedman*. The SAC does not direct a challenge
12 to lack of procedural safeguards in Executive Order 13526 itself, nor does it challenge the lack of
13 process with respect to the specific application of Executive Order 13526 to the Draft
14 Transparency Report.⁹ Likewise, to the extent Twitter asserts that any restrictions on it emanate
15 from the statutory reporting scheme set forth in 50 U.S.C. section 1874, the SAC does not
16 challenge the lack of procedural safeguards therein. In short, nothing in the SAC challenges a
17 “system of prior restraints” as in *Freedman*. Consequently, the Court cannot grant Twitter
18 affirmative relief based upon lack of compliance with the procedural protections in *Freedman*.¹⁰

19 _____
20 ⁹ The Court notes that Section 1.8 of Executive Order 13526 provides that “[a]uthorized
21 holders of information who, in good faith, believe that its classification status is improper are
22 encouraged and expected to challenge the classification status of the information in accordance
23 with agency procedures established under paragraph (b) of this section.” Executive Order 13526 §
24 1.8(a). Those procedures should cover all authorized holders of information “including authorized
25 holders outside the classifying agency.” *Id.* § 1.8(b). Neither party has cited to or argued for
26 application of any regulations governing a challenge to the classification here. However, the
27 Court notes that federal regulations implementing Executive Order 13526 have been enacted at 6
28 C.F.R., Chapter I, Part 7, subpart B; *see, e.g.*, 6 C.F.R. § 7.31(a) (“Authorized holders may submit
classification challenges in writing to the original classification authority with jurisdiction over the
information in question. If an original classification authority cannot be determined, the challenge
shall be submitted to the Office of the Chief Security Officer, Administrative Security Division”).

¹⁰ The SAC alleges a facial constitutional challenge to FISA’s secrecy provisions to the
extent they categorically prohibit the reporting of aggregate data. The Court does not find that
they do so restrict the aggregate data at issue here. The Government has, in part, argued that
FISA’s statutory nondisclosure provisions, applicable to the existence and contents of individual
orders, logically prohibit reporting of aggregate data about the number of such orders. The Court
has never found the Government’s logic persuasive on this point. The requirement not to disclose

United States District Court
Northern District of California

1 Because the Court finds that Twitter has not alleged an affirmative claim for relief based
2 upon *Freedman*, it need not reach the question of whether the Government’s decision here
3 satisfied those procedural safeguards.¹¹

4 **IV. CONCLUSION**

5 In sum, given the specific reasons identified in the classified declarations submitted, the
6 Court finds that strict scrutiny is satisfied both substantively and procedurally. The Government’s
7 motion for summary judgment is **GRANTED** and Twitter’s motion for summary judgment is
8 **DENIED**.¹²

9 The Court leaves for another action whether the procedural safeguards—if any—applicable
10 to a system of prior constraints premised upon deeming information “classified” pursuant to
11 Executive Order 13526 meets the standards set forth in *Freedman*.

12 This terminates Docket Nos. 309, 311.

13 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

14 Dated: April 17, 2020



**YVONNE GONZALEZ ROGERS
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE**

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19 a *particular* order is completely distinct from disclosing the *aggregate number* of orders. And,
20 indeed, that logic is contradicted by the statutory provision for aggregate data reporting set forth in
21 50 U.S.C. § 1874, which permits “a person *subject to a nondisclosure requirement* accompanying
22 an order . . . or a national security letter” to report publicly the aggregate number of such orders or
23 letters within certain numerical bands. 50 U.S.C. § 1874(a) (emphasis supplied). Regardless,
24 these allegations are not directed at a lack of procedural safeguards as required by *Freedman*.

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¹¹ The Court notes that the Ninth Circuit in *In re Nat'l Sec. Letter* emphasized that
Freedman’s procedural safeguards have been extended to a variety of situations in which the
government “requires a speaker to submit proposed speech for review and approval” before
publicizing it. *In re Nat'l Sec. Letter*, 863 F.3d 1110, 1128 (9th Cir. 2017); *see also John Doe, Inc.*
v. Mukasey, 549 F.3d 861, 871 (2d Cir. 2008) (“Where expression is conditioned on governmental
permission . . . the First Amendment generally requires procedural protections to guard against
impermissible censorship.”). The sort of pre-disclosure review and approval process that restricts
speech about metadata compiled by a recipient closely resembles the censorship systems raised in
Freedman and its progeny. The Government here offered no applicable procedural protections
similar to those cited with approval in *In re Nat'l Security Letter* or *Doe v. Mukaskey*.

¹² In light of this Order, the third count is dismissed as moot.