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TOROSSIAN RESIGNS AS CEO OF 5W PR

Ronn Torossian has resigned as [CEO of 5W Public Relations](#) after various reports that he secretly owned a news site and used it to hammer competitive firms.



Ronn Torossian

“I have become a distraction and the team deserves the freedom to operate in a context free of noise—noise I personally created,” he wrote in an internal memo acquired by *O’Dwyer’s*.

Torossian will serve as chairman of the New York-based firm that he founded in 2002.

Long-time staffers Dara Busch and Matt Caiola will lead the firm as co-CEOs.

Busch joined 5W seven years ago from [Rubenstein Public Relations](#) and heads the consumer practice.

Caiola is a 13-year veteran and handles 5W’s corporate, technology and digital marketing groups.

They will be responsible for employee relations, client management, and day-to-day decisions of the agency.

Torossian has no interest in selling the firm. “5W is thriving – we have no debt, we are profitable, and are growing. We have zero interest in selling,” he wrote.

5W holds the [No. 11 spot in O’Dwyer’s rankings](#) of independent firms with 2020 fees of \$38.1M.

WPP EXITS RUSSIA

WPP announced March 4 that it is discontinuing its operations in Russia due to Vladimir Putin’s decision to invade Ukraine, which has created a humanitarian crisis in Europe.



The ad/PR holding company, which has nearly 1,400 people in Russia, thanked them for their service to clients. It promised to work closely with clients during the winddown of operations.

WPP has 200 staffers in Ukraine who “have shown extraordinary resilience and bravery in the face of the horrific attack on their country,” according to its statement.

The British firm has partnered with the UN Refugee Agency to run a fundraising appeal to help Ukrainians forced to flee their homes.

NEWARK’S UNIV. HOSPITAL SEEKS PR FIRM

Newark’s University Hospital, which is the Garden State’s leading public health facility, is looking for a PR firm to design and implement a communications strategy.

UH, a 519-bed facility that opened in 1979, handled more than 83K emergency room visits, 15K inpatient admissions and 200K outpatient clinic visits in 2021. It announced on January 19 that it has selected global architecture firm Gensler to create a master plan for a new hospital.

The selected PR partner will “promote and position UH in the region as a world-class academic medical center offering excellent clinical services,” according to the RFP.

It will draft articles and op-eds to local, regional and national media outlets and help drive traffic to the hospital’s website and social media accounts.

UH will offer a three-year PR contract with an option to renew for two additional one-year periods.

Responses are due March 15 and go to: University Hospital; Department of Purchasing Services; 65 Bergen Street, 12th Floor; Newark, NJ 07103

[Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).



SKDK SUPPORTS UKRAINE’S SPEECH WRITING

SKDKnickerbocker has signed on to provide speech writing support to Ukraine’s Permanent Mission to the United Nations.

Working on a pro-bono basis, the Stagwell unit advised the Mission ahead of ambassador Sergiy Kyslytsya’s appearance before an emergency session of the Security Council during the evening of Feb. 23.

He urged the Russian ambassador to call foreign minister Sergey Lavrov and president Vladimir Putin and urge them to call off the invasion of his country.

He concluded by saying, “There is no purgatory for war criminals. They go straight to hell, Ambassador.”

Stephen Krupin, SKDK’s managing director and head of executive communications, handles the Ukraine account.

He was senior presidential speechwriter for Barack Obama and earlier was chief speechwriter for secretary of state John Kerry and senate majority leader Harry Reid.

SKDK does not have a formal contract with Ukraine.



Sergiy Kyslytsya

AMERICANS TRUST TECH, NOT SOCIAL MEDIA

Americans largely believe the tech industry has had a positive impact on their lives, but they also distrust social media companies, according to a [poll](#) from insights and analytics company Ipsos.



The report found that nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of U.S. adults believe the tech industry positively affects their lives, and

81 percent think technology is a good and important part of contemporary society. In total, more than half (53 percent) reported favorable sentiments of technology companies.

However, 59 percent of Americans simultaneously expressed unfavorable views regarding social media companies, and only 45 percent said they trust these platforms.

Specifically, a majority of Americans said they like Google (74 percent), Amazon (70 percent), Microsoft (60 percent) and Apple (52 percent). Americans also overwhelmingly reported enjoying online stores and marketplaces (83 percent) as well as the ability to find things on the Internet (88 percent) and the use of video chat or conference systems (71 percent).

As far as social media is concerned, 44 percent of those polled said they hold an unfavorable view of Twitter. When it comes to Facebook, Americans appear ambivalent (46 percent unfavorable, compared to 45 favorable). A majority still retain favorable views of YouTube (70 percent).

Regardless of Americans' antipathy for social media, however, most (61 percent) still said that, if given the choice, they'd rather keep the technology sector as it is, warts and all. And most oppose the idea of the government limiting what can be said on social media (57 percent), although more than a third (38 percent) believe the government should take a more active role in policing private-sector misbehavior. More than half (53 percent) think significant change in the tech world is unlikely, as the sector is too essential for our daily lives.

That said, 60 percent believe the degree of political bias exhibited by the tech sector is a major problem. More than three-quarters (79 percent) said they're concerned about social media-driven radicalization in the United States. More than two-thirds (69 percent) believe the U.S. mainstream media is more interested in making money than telling the truth.

Findings for the report were based on two Ipsos surveys, one which polled 1,022 U.S. adults in September and another which polled 1,016 U.S. adults in October.

VENTURA CO. TRANSIT SEEKS COMMS. HELP

Ventura County's Gold Coast Transit District, which serves two million passengers annually, is seeking a partner to provide on-call communications and marketing support.

The system operates fixed-route and paratransit services in the California cities of Oxnard, Ventura, Port Hueneme, Ojai and the areas between them. The service area has a population of about 375K and covers 91 square miles.

The District wants a versatile partner with transit-related expertise to handle PR, media relations, social media coordination, event planning, advertising and media buying.

It will issue a one-year contract with options for two additional one-year periods.

Proposals are due March 16.

[Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).



NEWS OF FIRMS

Propel, a PR software startup, closes a \$4.5 million seed round that brings the company's total funds to \$6 million. CEO Zach Cutler told Business Insider that the funds would be used to hire marketing and salespeople in New York, Florida and London.

He also plans to implement more machine learning. Propel counts Real Chemistry, Google and Antenna among its clients. Its media database includes more than one million journalists and 50 million influencers.



The Public Relations Society of America National Capital Chapter introduces their [Early Career Fellowship for Professionals of Color](#). The program, which is sponsored by global marketing, communications and digital transformation agency ICF Next, will provide four fellows with benefits that include a one-year mentorship with a PRSA NCC member, a three-month 2022 summer internship with ICF/ICF Next. The fellowship will run from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, and applications will be accepted [online](#) through April 30.

Bread & Law is launched by Clear founder and PRSA New York immediate past president Andrew Graham. The new PR agency is "designed to help companies thrive either despite or because of the erosion of trust in institutions and expertise." Bread & Law will also serve as an incubator of specialized agencies, starting with a practice for start-to-finish thought leadership campaigns with fixed pricing and guaranteed results, and an influencer marketing practice that targets micro-influencers.

My Code, a digital media company that connects brands, agencies, publishers and storytellers with diverse audiences, starts up **W Code**, which focuses on delivering authentic messaging and content to female audiences. Its offerings include high-impact media across audio, CTV, video and display, robust creative content solutions, and first-party data from My Code's Intelligence Center. W Code is targeting brands within lifestyle, cooking, health and wellness, beauty and fashion, wedding and parenting verticals.

Subject Matter is on the receiving end of an investment from private equity firm **Coral Tree Partners**. The agency says the partnership will let it add capabilities while accelerating its growth. Subject Matter's daily business operations will continue to be overseen by CEO Nicole Cornish and the agency's founders.



Kite Hill PR launches its inaugural "[Tech For Good](#)" pitch-off for purpose-driven, pro-social technology companies. The winning entrant will benefit from a bespoke, comprehensive three-month PR program. To qualify, applicants must be BIPOC/woman/LGBTQIA+-led and US-based. They must also have closed a Seed or Series A fundraising round. The agency is accepting applications through the submission form on [its website](#) until March 31.

Steinreich Communications Group acquires the Omniado Agency, a Durban, South Africa-based design and digital marketing firm. Omniado founder and CEO Dan Chazen will join Steinreich Communications as creative services director, along with all current members of his staff. Steinreich Communications says the acquisition represents a strategic opportunity, as many of the firm's clients, particularly those in the Middle East, are expanding their businesses into Africa.

'SENSE OF TERROR' GRIPS MOSCOW

There is a sense of terror in Moscow as Vladimir Putin has put an undeclared state of martial law into place in the aftermath of his invasion of Ukraine, according to Arkady



Arkady Ostrovsky

Ostrovsky, Russian and Eastern European correspondent for *The Economist*.

"Everybody is so tense," he told an Economist webinar on March 4. "People are being followed. Cars are being searched. It's like an insider junta has seized power."

Russian-born Ostrovsky, who has reported from Moscow for the Economist and *Financial Times* for nearly 20 years, has never seen the city so on edge and controlled by

such a militaristic totalitarian regime.

He noted that Russians have become comfortable accepting the "Big Lie" spewed by the Kremlin's propaganda machine because they are afraid to challenge the government and just want to go on with their lives.

Since Putin has muzzled what was left of the free press, there's also a dearth of credible information outlets.

Ikea Shutdown is Big Psychological Blow

Ostrovsky, who left Moscow on March 3 for Istanbul, spoke about the huge impact Ikea's decision to close its stores and factories has had on the Russian people.

He said when Ikea first opened in Moscow in 2000, it symbolized that Russia was becoming a "normal European country." The Swedish retailer was "more than just a shopping beacon, it was what the people wanted their country to be," said Ostrovsky, whose Moscow apartment was furnished by goods from Ikea.

The psychological impact of Ikea's shutting down signals to Russians that "Your Past Life is Gone," he said.

Ikea operates 17 retail facilities across Russia and employs 15K people in the country. Russians flocked to shop at Ikea following news of the shutdown.

"There will soon be nowhere to spend money," said Ostrovsky, who noted that Russia is heavily dependent on imported consumer goods.

Ostrovsky is the author of "The Invention of Russia: From Gorbachev's Freedom to Putin's War," published in 2017.

No Qualms About Using Nukes

Zanny Minton Beddoes, Economist editor-in-chief; Ed Carr, deputy editor; and Shashank Joshi, defense reporter, also participated in the webinar.

They praised the leadership of Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky and the will of the Ukrainian people to resist the Russian invaders.

Zelensky's decision to remain in Kyiv rather than flee the country inspired NATO members to get their acts together and coordinate policies.

Germany, for instance, dropped its policy that blocked the shipment of arms to Ukraine. At first, it only planned to ship helmets to Ukraine, which drew widespread scorn. The Germans also abandoned the notion that the way to "tame Russia is to embrace it."

Putin, the editors noted, is already "at war with NATO" and would be willing to attack ammunition dumps in Poland or Romania, if the flow of sophisticated weapons to

Ukrainian fighters stalls the Russian invasion.

The Russian leader has no qualms about deploying tactical nuclear weapons. The editors said Putin views nuclear weapons as a license to be as aggressive as he wants to be, rather than a deterrent.

What is a likely "off-ramp" for Putin to defuse the Ukrainian crisis?

It was suggested that he is waiting for a phone call from Joe Biden to propose a peace conference, preferably at Yalta, where Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin carved out the post-World War II world.

GM'S EISSENSTAT DRIVES TO EDELMAN

Everett Eissenstat, who was senior VP for global public policy at General Motors, has joined Edelman Global Advisory as North America chair and global trade lead.

He will help clients navigate government policies and geopolitical dynamics to achieve their business objectives.

During his three-year run at GM, Eissenstat guided policies dealing with trade, labor relations, workforce transformation, cybersecurity, sustainability, electric vehicles, emissions and supply chain disruptions.

He reported to CEO Mary Barra.

Prior to GM, Eissenstat served in Donald Trump's White House as deputy assistant to the president for international economic affairs and deputy director of the National Economic Council.

He handled global energy and trade matters and was US lead negotiator for G-20, APEC and G-7 summits.

EGA, which launched in August 2021 and has more than 140 staffers, also announced that Martin Reiser, who was policy director for Republican whip Congressman Steve Scalise, has become a senior advisor.



Everett Eissenstat

DENTONS REPS COLOMBIAN POLITICOS IN DC

Dentons Global Advisors Government Relations has signed on to provide DC representation for a trio of politicians from Colombia's Hope Center Coalition.

That group includes Juan Manuel Galan, who is running for the presidency in the election slated for May.

Dentons will provide government affairs and PA advisory services for the politicians tied to a trip to Washington "to better understand the US political systems" for a \$32,500 fee, according to its contract dated Feb. 1.

DGA partners John Russell and Sander Lurie handle the work.

Russell was deputy to the chief of staff to House speaker Denny Hastert and outreach director for Republican majority leader Tom DeLay. Lurie was chief of staff for Democratic senators Debbie Stabenow of Michigan and Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey.

Ed Reilly, who once headed FTI Consulting's strategic communications unit, helms DGA Government Relations.



Juan Manuel Galan

NC'S CRYSTAL COAST SEEKS TRAVEL PR

North Carolina's Crystal Coast wants to book a PR firm to promote the 85-mile stretch of beaches as a premier overnight destination with an emphasis on the shoulder- and off-season periods.



Also known as the Southern Outer Banks, the region features towns such as Atlantic Beach, Beaufort, Emerald Isle and Morehead City.

The selected firm will handle media relations, content creation, FAM trips, events and partnerships.

It will integrate PR with the Crystal Coast Tourism Authority's advertising partners, recommend trade show participation and have a background in building and managing highly recognized brands.

Interested parties must contact Rita LeClair (Rita@crystal-coastnc.org) by March 10 to register to pitch the account and receive a more complete RFP.

[Read the preliminary RFP \(PDF\).](#)

MCKINSEY'S LIVERMORE TO BRUNSWICK

McKinsey Spencer Livermore, a proposal strategist for the European banking practice at McKinsey & Co., has joined Brunswick Group in London as partner, client development.



Spencer Livermore

He also was director of strategy at Teneo and senior strategist at ad agency Saatchi & Saatchi.

Baron Livermore also did a ten-year stint in the UK government, working for Gordon Brown when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer and Prime Minister.

Neal Wolin, Brunswick CEO, lauded Livermore's "extensive advisory experience, which will further strengthen our client development efforts around the world."

COOPER EXITS BLACKROCK FOR VISA

Frank Cooper is leaving his job as senior managing director and global chief marketing officer at BlackRock to take the CMO spot at Visa.

Before coming on board at BlackRock in 2017, Cooper was CMO/CCO at BuzzFeed. He was previously chief marketing officer, global consumer engagement at PepsiCo, and was a senior executive at Motown and Def Jam.



Frank Cooper

Cooper will lead Visa's global marketing organization to drive demand for the company's products, services and solutions. He will guide all facets of the brand, from amplifying its purpose through campaigns and activations to developing global sponsorships.

Cooper will also serve as a member of the company's executive committee and report to chairman and chief executive officer Al Kelly.

"Frank is a rare mix of creative brand strategist with strong business acumen and a leader who understands the deeper brand opportunity that comes from leading with purpose," said Kelly.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

Marino adds **Etain Health**, **Cherry** and **FlowerHire** to its list of clients in the cannabis industry. For Etain Health, New York's only women-owned-and-operated medical marijuana dispensary, Marino will execute communications strategy for its New York presence, including its transition into the adult-use market, as well as its expansion into New Jersey. For cannabis cultivation and genetics brand Cherry, Marino will build brand identity and visibility. The agency has been retained to expand brand awareness, thought leadership and overall media relations for cannabis recruiting agency Flower Hire.



LDPR picks up **Marine & Lawn**, a collection of luxury hotels in golfing destinations across Scotland and Ireland, to its client roster. The agency will execute a comprehensive PR campaign for the client. LDPR has also signed on to represent **The Charleston Place**, a 433-room property in Charleston, SC's historic district, and **Solo**, which offers day bags ranging from backpacks, totes and duffel bags to hybrid bags, briefs, and sleeves featuring different styles and functions.

Wachsman signs on to work with financial services company **Singlife with Aviva** on a multi-year brand campaign to help the company better connect with diverse audiences. Singlife with Aviva, which was formed by the merger of Singapore-based insurer Singlife and Aviva Singapore, also offers investment opportunities in mutual funds and unit trusts. Wachsman, which worked with the original Singlife insurtech company, will help the new brand put forward its key priorities, particularly in the sustainability space.

Jenerate PR is named agency of record for **Pacific'O on the Beach**, a beachfront restaurant on the Hawaiian island of Maui. The agency will work to elevate the property's brand awareness on a nationwide scale. "Jenerate PR came highly recommended by industry professionals for their proven success in increasing national visibility for Hawaii culinary brands," said Pacific'O on the Beach managing partner Qiana Di Bari.



Zapwater Communications adds **Hotel Belmar** in Costa Rica and **Borgo San Vincenzo** in Italy to its client list of luxury resorts, hotels, airlines and destination marketing organizations. Zapwater will be responsible for promoting Hotel Belmar in the North American media marketplace. For Borgo San Vincenzo, will work to launch the property through services including media relations, influencer marketing, strategic partnerships and events.

The Berman Group signs on to represent technology company **Kastle Systems**. The agency's work will focus on expanding Kastle's brand presence in commercial real estate and proptech markets. The Berman Group has also been named public relations team for **Waypoint Residential**, a developer, owner and investor in multifamily communities, and proptech firm **Swivel**.

Firecracker PR picks up **Vajro**, which allows ecommerce stores to create their own Android and iOS apps without needing to write code, and compliance management platform Inspectorio. The agency will be responsible for overseeing strategic media relations for the clients. Other recent additions to Firecracker's tech client roster include **BioMech**, **Renogy**, **In Mind Cloud** and **Findability Sciences**.

70% OF DIGITAL ADS TO BE MOBILE BY 2026

Advertising that targets consumers using mobile phones and devices is expected to account for 70 percent of all digital ad spends within the next four years, according to a report from [financial insights hub StockApps.com](https://www.financialinsights.com).



According to StockApps' report, mobile has been responsible for driving significant gains in the digital advertising world. Mobile platforms accounted for 60 percent of digital ad revenues last year, and will make up 62 percent of digital ad spends this year and 64 percent in 2023. Mobile's share of digital ad spending is expected to increase by approximately two percent every year for the next five years.

However, an overview of mobile's escalating gains in the last five years reveals that the annual rate of growth for mobile ads has actually slowed down. According to the StockApps report, the annual growth rate of overall ad spending on mobile platforms was 11 percent in 2018, when mobile accounted for less than half (49 percent) of digital ad spends. This growth fell to nine percent in 2019 (when mobile comprised 54 percent of digital ad spends) and then to seven percent in 2020 (when mobile accounted for 57 percent). Last year, StockApps estimated the annual growth rate was expected to hover somewhere between three and four percent.

The StockApps report was based on numbers obtained from Internet statistics company Statista.

PRECISION ADDS CONSUMER PRO WILLIAMS

Precision Strategies has named Deanna Williams senior VP in its communications practice.

She did a six-year stint as media relations director at Macy's, where she developed PR strategies for special events, product launches; served as a community liaison for cause marketing initiatives; and led on crisis management/response.



Deanna Williams

Williams handled media for high-profile events such as the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and Fourth of July fireworks spectacular.

Earlier, she was director of global marketing, consumer brand PR at Marriott International and head of communications & PR for Swatch Group US.

Williams also worked at [Ruder Finn](https://www.ruderfinn.com), [Edelman](https://www.edelman.com) and Marina Maher Communications.

NYT'S ZERBIAN TO RUN MUCK RACK'S COMMS

Muck Rack hires former *New York Times* executive director, corporate communications Linda Zebian as director of communications, a newly created role. Zebian was most recently a freelance communications advisor at the Times.



Linda Zebian

Before joining the paper in 2011, she worked in the communications department at *Consumer Reports*.

In her new post, Zebian will set communications strategy for Muck Rack, including messaging, issues management, media relations and employee communications.

TEXAS TARGETS EUROPEAN TRAVELERS

Texas is looking for a firm to handle tourism PR and marketing services in Continental Europe with a primary focus on Germany and a secondary push targeted on France and the Netherlands.

Tourism spending in the Lone Star State hit the \$83B mark in pre-pandemic 2019 and generated \$7.8B in state and local taxes. The travel business employed 1.3M Texans.



The selected firm will "generate maximum positive coverage of the Travel Texas product while expanding perceptions of the diverse travel experiences Texas offers visitors" and develop a robust social media push, according to the RFP.

It will arrange FAM trips, conduct promotional events, set up press conferences, respond to influencer/media inquiries and handle crisis communications.

Responses are due March 17. They may be hand-delivered or shipped overnight to: Office of the Governor; Financial Services Division; Attention: Purchasing; 1100 San Jacinto Blvd.; Austin, Texas 78701

[Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

LEE TAKES CMO SPOT AT NETFLIX

Netflix names Marian Lee chief marketing officer. Lee joined Netflix in July 2021 as vice president of marketing for the US and Canada.

Before that, she was vice president and global co-head of music at Spotify, director of marketing at J.Crew and held several executive positions at Condé Nast. Lee succeeds Bozoma Saint John, who came to Netflix in 2020 after serving in top marketing positions at Endeavor, Uber, Apple and PepsiCo.



Marian Lee

"Marian is a strategic marketer with deep experience not just in entertainment but also more broadly having worked at fashion and media brands," said Netflix co-CEO and chief content officer Ted Sarandos.

SVC GOES TO BAT FOR THE MARLINS

[Sard Verbinnen & Co.](https://www.sardverbinnen.com) represents the Miami Marlins as its CEO and former Yankee shortstop Derek Jeter decides to quit and give up his four percent ownership stake in the team.

Jeter joined the Bruce Sherman-led group that purchased the ball club for \$1.2B in September 2017. He exited because "the vision for the future of the franchise is different than the one I signed up to lead," according to Jeter's statement.

Sherman wished Jeter good luck in his future endeavors and said the Marlins "have a deep bench that will oversee both business and baseball decisions."

Under the leadership of Jeter, a five-time World Series champ as a Yankee, the Marlins owned the worst record in the National League. The team did sneak into the playoffs during the COVID-19-shortened 2020 season.

Sherman claims current ownership is "determined to build a team that will return to the postseason and excite Marlin fans and the local community."

Sard Verbinnen has George Sard, Michael Abrahams and Columbia Clancy fielding media inquiries about the Marlins.

COMMENTARY



Weak tea from the PRCA... UK's Public Relations and Communications Assn. issued a statement on March 1 warning firms may face expulsion for working

with Russian organizations on the sanctions lists. Duh!

It also urged members "to consider the reputational consequences of working for companies which whilst not sanctioned nonetheless have links with the Russian Government."

That's pretty rich, coming from an outfit that is based in "Londongrad."

British firms have earned millions of pounds by laundering the reputations of Russian oligarchs who are friends of Vlad.

A British government report in 2020 found that the country welcomed oligarchs with open arms. It said that "PR firms, charities, political interests, academia and cultural institutions were all willing beneficiaries of Russian money."

The Report called Russian meddling with British affairs "the new normal."

That may be coming to an end.

The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on March 3 announced a full asset freeze and travel ban on Alisher Usmanov and Igor Shuvalov, which it described as two of Russia's leading oligarchs with significant interests in Britain and close links to the Kremlin.

The two control assets of more than \$25B.

The UK government also will set up an "Oligarch Task-force" of ministers and officials to coordinate cross-government work to sanction oligarchs.

The invasion of Ukraine will bring a day of reckoning for PR firms that burnished the image of Putin's corrupt cronies.

That day can't come soon enough.

Wizz Air earns PR wings... The Budapest airline is offering 100K free flights to all of its Continental European destinations to Ukrainian refugees in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania.

Almost 2M Ukrainians have fled their land since Russia invaded the country on February 24. More than half of them are in Poland. Hungary is the next destination of choice, followed by Slovakia and Romania (50K).

Wizz has added larger planes and flights in the countries bordering Ukraine to accommodate more people. The airline's free flight offer will run through March.

Wizz also has a \$40 "Euro rescue fare" to fly Ukrainians who wound up in a country that was not their intended destination elsewhere.

Launched in 2004, Wizz flies 710 routes from 44 countries.

Asleep at the PR switch... The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on February 28 released its 3,700-page report sketching out a doomsday scenario of fires, floods, famines and species extinctions unless immediate steps are taken to combat climate change.

The influential Climate Reality Project dubbed the Report "the gold standard of climate research" and warned that its

message offered "the last window to act."

UN Secretary-General António Guterres summed it up simply: "This Report reveals how people and the planet are getting clobbered by climate change."

Where's the buzz? The Report, unfortunately, failed to get much traction as the world's media were focused laser-like on the invasion of Ukraine that was launched February 24.

Rightly so, the media covered the death and destruction suffered by Ukrainians and the global outrage that is today's news, rather than the environmental catastrophe of tomorrow.

The Climate Reality Project noted the poor timing of the [Report by beginning its analysis of it](#) by acknowledging "the tragedy and suffering now underway in the war in Ukraine."

Compiled by 270 researchers from 67 nations, The Report undoubtedly was years in the making.

What was the rush in releasing it?

The UN should have used some common sense before going public with its global warming masterpiece.

SUNY strikes out Chinese propaganda... The State University of New York quietly closed the last Confucius Institute, which is funded by the Government of the People's Republic of China, that it once hosted on campuses throughout the state. The *Albany Times Union* reported February 27 that UAlbany's continued operation of the Confucius Institute threatened federal research dollars.

New York Republican Congresswoman Elise Stefanik introduced the "End College Chinese Communist Partnerships Act" in 2021 that would block taxpayer funds to schools that have partnerships with the Confucius Institute or Chinese government.

There once were about 120 Confucius Institutes in the US. There are now 23 of them, though the University of Akron, Bryant University and Alabama A&M plan to shut their facilities by the end of the year.

They will be hardly missed.

Lobbying disclosure thrown for a loop in the Empire State. The New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics took down its online lobbying disclosure system after it was the "target of a deliberate malicious cyberattack" on February. 25.

JCOPE says it has no information about who may have launched the attack or if there was a breach of the system.

The Office of New York State's Attorney General, state police and the Department of Consumer Protection are investigating the matter.

"Our first and highest priority is the safety and integrity of the data entrusted to the Commission by the regulated community," said JCOPE executive director Sanford Berland.

JCOPE is working with its partners in the information technology sector and law enforcement to identify the scope of the attack to ensure the incident response is comprehensive, he said.

JCOPE was established in 2011 to restore public trust in government by ensuring compliance with New York's ethics laws. The cyberattack undermines some of that public trust.

—Kevin McCauley