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MARYLAND TO ENLIST ECODEV PARTNER

Maryland is scouting for a firm to facilitate outreach and input for an economic development plan.

The resulting blueprint will focus on assessing the current level of economic growth and capitalize on positive trends, including federal funding, the state's existing asset base, and Governor Wes Moore's focus on sustainable, inclusive change to grow the Old Line State's economy.



Working with the Maryland Dept. of Commerce, the selected firm will identify, review, and summarize the findings of background materials, and economic strategy reports.

That review will enable the consultant to understand the recent history and breadth of economic development planning in the state and ensure that all relevant priorities identified in prior reports are properly incorporated into the current strategy, according to the RFP.

The firm will analyze Maryland's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to economic development attributing to the State's competitiveness. It will then identify Maryland's strategic high growth industries and recommend mechanisms to amplify the industries' and the state's assets.

Proposals are due Feb. 6. They go to: Rachel Cruse; Maryland Department of Commerce; 401 E. Pratt St., 10th Fl.; Baltimore, MD 21202

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

RF BINDER SIGNS US UNIT OF SAUDI FUND

RF/Binder Partners has scooped up a contract to provide a new brand identity, website and social media strategy for USSA International, which is the American subsidiary of Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund.



The communications effort may demonstrate how the Kingdom's Public Investment Fund, which has more than \$775B in assets, is driving Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 economic transformation plan.

RF Binder's one-year contract went into effect on Jan. 11. It has a budget of \$140K.

CEO Amy Binder leads the five-person USSA team that includes Arnel Leslie, executive managing director; David Weinstein, chief creative officer; Esther Aubry, executive producer; and Katie Richanbach, senior designer.

Scott Helfman, head of corporate affairs at USSA, oversees the RF Binder work.

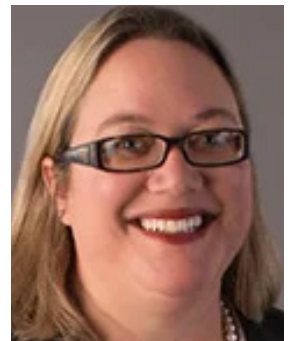
EDELMAN'S BUTCHER HEADS TO BCW

BCW names Kari Butcher president, research, data & insights, North America, effective January 29. Butcher joins the agency from Edelman Data & Intelligence (DXI), where she most recently served as global head of corporate & crisis data x intelligence.

Before coming to Edelman, Butcher spent nearly 15 years as a partner in several firms specializing in voter insights and targeting for public affairs, political advocacy and social media/digital communications related to California ballot initiatives and national issue campaigns.

Based in Washington, D.C., Butcher will further build and scale BCW's research, data and insights capabilities.

"Kari's considerable expertise in using data to yield business and communications opportunities that protect and promote clients' reputations will be especially valuable during this current period of unprecedented global uncertainty," said BCW CEO, Americas Kristine Boyden.



Kari Butcher

JOELE FRANK'S KAUFMAN HEADS TO FTI

Tanner Kaufman, a 10-year veteran of Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher, has joined FTI Consulting's strategic communications practice as managing director in its M&A & activism unit.

He has advised clients on special situations including friendly and unsolicited transactions, shareholder activism defense, proxy contests, leadership changes and short attacks.

Kaufman handled transactions for Emerson, Terminix, Cabot Oil & Gas, Barnes & Noble, Gannett, Alder BioPharmaceuticals, Panera Bread, WebMD, Keurig Green Mountain and Pep Boys.

He has helped companies defend against activist investors such as Carl Icahn, Nelson Peltz's Trian Partners, ValueAct and Elliott Management.

Kaufman is based in FTI's New York office.



Tanner Kaufman

MISINFORMATION BECOMES TOP GLOBAL RISK

The world today faces a series of ever-present crises: war, climate change, inflation and a lingering pandemic to name a few. But according to the latest report published by the World Economic Forum, we now find ourselves confronting another:



Global risks ranked by severity over the next two years.

misinformation and disinformation, now exacerbated by the rapidly evolving rise of increasingly powerful artificial intelligence.

For the first time in the survey's 19-year history, misinformation and disinformation was ranked by experts as having the most perceived risk severity among global risks over the next two years.

Extreme weather was ranked as the number-two short-term global risk. For the first time in 10 years, cyber insecurity also made it into the top-five list of short-term risks, ranking number four, behind societal polarization (number three) and ahead of interstate armed conflict (number five). Filling out the list of top-10 global risks were a lack of economic opportunity, inflation, involuntary migration, economic downturn and pollution, respectively.

The report defined "global risk" as "the possibility of the occurrence of an event or condition which, if it occurs, would negatively impact a significant proportion of global GDP, population or natural resources."

The report warned that misinformation and disinformation pose great threats from foreign and domestic actors seeking to widen societal and political divides, sowing mistrust in elections and increasing societal polarization, potentially creating a public discourse that invites some governments to respond with propaganda and censorship.

However, the report noted that experts expect the perceived threat of misinformation and disinformation to wane somewhat over the next decade. When asked to rate the likely severity of global risks over the next 10 years, misinformation and disinformation slid to number five. Similarly, societal polarization falls to number-nine over the longer term. On the other hand, adverse outcomes related to AI technologies rose to sixth place over the 10-year period.

And while experts appear to be somewhat unanimous regarding misinformation's threat in the short-term, over the long term, they appear to be somewhat divided. Only experts working in academia view misinformation among the top-five threats over the next 10 years, while those in the private sector rank it number six, government experts rank it number eight and international organization experts rank it number nine.

Instead, experts identified extreme weather events to be the number-one risk in terms of severe global impact over the next 10 years. According to the report, nearly two-thirds of experts polled (63 percent) "predict a turbulent or stormy outlook, with upheavals and an elevated risk of global catastrophes" within the following decade.

The World Economic Forum's 19th annual "Global Risks Report" presented the findings of the Global Risks Perception Survey, which polled 1,500 global experts across academia, business, government, the international community and civil society. Responses were collected between and October 2023.

ON THE MOVE

ROKK Solutions hires **Amanda Marsh** as VP of digital and paid media. Marsh joins the agency from **POLITICO**, where she was senior director of brand & corporate partnerships. Her previous positions include associate media director at **Bully Pulpit Interactive** and global business marketing manager, gaming at **Facebook**. "Amanda's agency and publisher-side expertise is a great addition to the ROKK paid media team," said ROKK Solutions co-founder and partner **Rodell Mollineau**.



Amanda Marsh

BRG Communications brings on **Susan Goodell Gouard** as SVP. Goodell Gouard, who supported BRG as a consultant in 2023, was previously a group VP at **MWWPR**. Before that, she served as VP in **Edelman's Krispr Communications** unit and ran her own event planning and communications agency in Baltimore for more than six years. "Adding Susan to our team deepens our bench of highly skilled and tenured public relations professionals," said BRG president and CEO **Jane Barwis**.

Kimball Hughes Public Relations promotes PR manager **James McKinsey** to lead its crisis communications team. Before joining **Kimball Hughes** in 2021, McKinsey worked at **Buttonwood Communications Group**. He has led strategic communications and media relations campaigns in offshore wind, tourism, government and nonprofit work, and has spearheaded crisis and media trainings. In his new post, he will lead the agency's crisis communications experts to help organizations plan, train for and manage communications crises.

Clarity tabs chief client officer **Rachel Gilley** to succeed departing CEO **Sami McCabe**. Gilley joined the agency in 2019 as UK managing director. She was previously managing director at **Bite Communications** (now **Archetype**). "Rachel has been crucial to Clarity's growth story since joining five years ago—overseeing operations in Europe, managing the agency's largest office in London, while supporting me as part of the global leadership team," said McCabe.



Rachel Gilley

Relevance International brings on **Jessica Abercrombie**, **Marynia Kruk** and **Kirsty Gallagher** as VPs. Abercrombie, who serves as vice president, PR, is based in **Los Angeles**. She most recently was founder of **The Abercrombie Agency**. Kruk, vice president, PR in **Relevance's New York office**, was a director with **Antenna Group**. Gallagher, based in **New York** as VP, digital, most recently served as an account supervisor at a digital and creative agency in **Philadelphia**.

TrailRunner International hires **Anan Ibrahim** and **Christoph Diesch** as directors in its **UAE office**, following the appointment of **Seth Hand** as head of the **Middle East** in September 2023. Ibrahim most recently led **Edelman's UAE energy practice**. Diesch also comes to **TrailRunner** from **Edelman**, where he was most recently head of technology for the **UAE**.

Hannah Guenther, who was based in **NY**, has transitioned to the **UAE** to help serve clients and work alongside **Seth**, **Anan** and **Christoph**.

BETTER LABOR RELATIONS BEGIN WITH AI

Call it the Year of Union Wins: 2023 saw UAW, SAG-AFTRA, Teamsters, airline pilots, healthcare workers, baristas, teachers and technicians win concessions from management. All told, some 453,000 workers walked off the job in [312 separate actions](#).

The fact that unions prevailed in 2023 makes it likely even more of them will strike in 2024.



**Eric Blankenbaker and
Keisha McClellan**

But executives needn't fear the contest. By leveraging AI to analyze the other side, anticipate its demands and test-drive the strategy, executives can arrive at the bargaining table positioned to negotiate that rarest of outcomes,

a deal that both labor unions and shareholders can celebrate.

We know this to be true because we helped America's bedrock brands secure win-wins in 2023. What we learned from our engagements promises to transform not just labor relations but also brand reputation management.

Let's break down the steps.

Understand the narrative

Successful negotiations demand that, before entering them, you understand the narrative about your company. AI can help.

To give one manufacturer that awareness, we used AI models designed to detect risk to analyze the union's reach and impact on social as well as conventional media channels. We could then visualize the members, workers, activists and government officials following the union's spokesperson. We could see which influencers, reporters and bots were inclined to amplify his message and which of his messages got traction. We could also see which peripheral players were distorting those messages in the endless social and media feedback loop, as well as the channels they favored.

The relationships mapped by this analysis enabled us to develop a media strategy capable of ensuring our client's position was modified to meet the union narrative where it was.

By knowing exactly who stood to benefit from contentious labor relations, we could anticipate where disinformation was most likely to crop up and deploy a position that acknowledged the concerns being raised and put into place corrective actions before false narratives could destabilize negotiations.

Know the other side

Every negotiator hopes to bargain from a position of strength. That means knowing exactly who you're dealing with ahead of time. What motivated workers to collectivize? What advantages to membership do they see—and what disadvantages? And perhaps most importantly: What will they consider a huge win coming out of the next negotiation?

Despite the highly publicized nature of New Labor's demands, the answers to these questions aren't always obvious. AI can take out the guesswork.

For example, we've used AI to help clients predict critical issues in upcoming labor negotiations. In one case, after conducting a thorough analysis of social chatter and media coverage about healthcare benefits, the tool revealed that paid sick leave was a hot-button issue. In what both the union and our client considered a win, workers walked away with what they came for: paid sick leave.

Test-drive your narrative

Successful negotiations ultimately rely on the relationship between management and labor and, by extension, the community where employees live. AI can't cure a toxic relationship. However, it can help maintain respectful and constructive relations by ensuring that unwelcome news is delivered as sensitively as possible.

We saw this happen when a client closed a long-standing facility that had a significant positive impact on its community. Company leaders sought to justify the closing of it by appealing to employees' sense of reason: The facility was old, and upgrading it would be prohibitively expensive, so the most financially sound thing to do was close it.

We didn't need AI to tell us this was the wrong approach to take. But which emotional appeal was likeliest to soften the blow and stave off unwanted publicity?

The communications approach we deployed succeeded in de-escalating the situation for three reasons:

We put ourselves in the shoes of the affected workers and members of the community, drawing on their experience to create several different versions of the announcement.

We made sure their language and tone affirmed the values that the company so publicly stood for.

By using learnings from our AI models to forecast their impact, we selected the version of the announcement that landed with the least damaging impact.

Level the playing field

With AI-guided media analysis, leaders can not only see what labor is saying but also tailor their communications strategies to use the same machinery labor uses to reach their supporters. With intelligence on peripheral actors, companies can anticipate and mitigate collateral damage.

Knowledge is power. With AI, management can better understand what it needs to meet an empowered labor movement.

Eric Blankenbaker is an Executive Vice President at Weber Shandwick. Keisha McClellan is a Vice President at Weber Shandwick.

KESSIMMEE AIRPORT WANTS TO TOUT SERVICES

Florida's Kissimmee Gateway Airport has flown out an RFP for advertising and PR to promote its flight training and aviation services capabilities.

The facility ranks as central Florida's leader in career aviation training. It provides basic to accelerated/intensive flight training for domestic and foreign markets in order to operate aircraft flying in the business and leisure sectors.

The Airport recently closed an 18-hole golf course on its property to create the Kissimmee Aerospace Park, which will be designed to accommodate large planes, aircraft storage hangars, aviation support centers and manufacturing/repair stations.

The selected firm also will conduct outreach to the public to inform them that the Airport has an annual economic impact of nearly \$1B on the community.

The Airport has a \$60K annual marketing budget. It will offer a one-year contract with options to renew for two additional 12-month periods.

Responses are due Feb. 1. They go to: City of Kissimmee Gateway Airport, 401 Dyer Blvd, Kissimmee, FL 34741.

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



WESTCHESTER WANTS MARKETING SERVICES

New York's Westchester County is looking for an agency that can provide social media marketing services.



The Hudson Valley county is the most populous Empire State county north of New York City.

The Westchester County Office of Economic Development is seeking proposals from agencies that can develop and deploy social media marketing materials in an effort to drive increased

reach and engagement, showcase WCOED's initiatives in the county and raise awareness of Westchester County as a great place to work, live and visit.

Scope of the work includes: creating and posting content to social media channels, content development, making recommendations and presenting quarterly social media reports.

Terms of the agreement are slated to begin on March 1 and end on December 31, 2024. Proposals, due by 4:30 p.m. (ET) on Feb. 2, should be sent via email to bgibbons@westchestergov.com with the subject line: "Social Media Marketing Services from 'Name of Agency.'"

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

FGS, JOELE FRANK WORK \$35B CHIPS DEAL

FGS Global and Joele Frank handle the \$35B deal in which Synopsys semiconductor design company is acquiring Ansys software simulation systems provider.



The merger will enable Synopsys "to deliver a holistic, powerful and seamlessly integrated silicon to systems approach to innovation to help maximize the capabilities of technology R&D teams across a broad range of industries," he added.

Ajei Gopal, CEO of Ansys, said the deal "brings together each company's highly complementary capabilities."

The transaction, which will result in a \$400M annual cost savings, is expected to close during the first-half of next year.

FGS Global handles Synopsys, while Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher work Ansys.

TENEO TAPS SPORTS JOURNO GREENSLADE

Teneo has hired Nick Greenslade, deputy sports editor at *The Times* and *Sunday Times*, as managing director for its strategy and communications unit in London.

He led the coverage of the social and political issues surrounding soccer, rugby, cricket and cycling. Greenslade is the author of "The Thin White Line," which deals with a fixing scandal in Pakistan's cricket leagues.



Nick Greenslade

Neil Daugherty, senior managing director and sports sector lead for Teneo UK, called Greenslade a fearless journalist and editor who will make a brilliant PR counselor.

Teneo believes as more institutional capital flows into sports, there is a need for higher quality PR advice, and that Greenslade

will help the firm meet the growing demand for sophisticated communications counsel.

BROWNSTEIN HYATT INKS BAHRAIN PACT

Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck has signed a \$780K one-year pact with Bahrain to track, manage and influence its relationship with the US. Located in the Persian Gulf, Bahrain is host to the US Navy's Fifth Fleet.

Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Bahrain's crown prince and prime minister, visited Washington in September to sign a comprehensive security integration and prosperity agreement with the US.

Bahrain is the only Arab state to join the 10-member US-led coalition to protect shipping in the Red Sea against Houthi attacks.

Canada, France, Italy, Netherlands, Seychelles, Norway, Spain and the UK round out that alliance.

Brownstein's five-person Bahrain team includes Ed Royce, former California Republican Congressman and chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee; Mark Begich, ex-Alaska Democratic Senator; and Brian McGuire, ex-chief of staff for Senator Mitch McConnell.



EQUAL VOICE LOOKS FOR PR SUPPORT

Equal Voice, a Canadian nonprofit that is committed to creating a pathway for women to run for elected office, is looking for a PR firm.

The goal is to increase the profile of the Ottawa-based organization as an expert in gender equality in politics in both the traditional and social media.

EV wants to be the first organization that its stakeholders—media, political parties, governments—think about when equipping women with the tools and support they need to run for office.

The selected firm will have an office in Ottawa. The budget for the one-year push is \$40K. Responses, due Jan. 26, go to Lais Maurilio at lais@equalvoice.ca.

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



FERNANDEZ TAKES HEALTHCARE POST

Nelson Fernandez, former North American chair of [APCO Worldwide](#) and managing director of Burson-Marsteller, has joined Volunteers in Medicine Berkshires as director of communications and PA.

He is in charge of internal/external communications, public policy issues and outreach to stakeholders.

The Berkshire Eagle noted that Fernandez had been serving as a VIMB volunteer for the past year.

He has more than 30 years of PR experience and has counseled Pfizer, IBM, Altria, Kraft, McCormick, Ford Foundation and Accenture.

Fernandez launched Crosby Street Consultants in May 2019 after a nearly 13-year run at APCO, in which he co-founded the New York offices of the DC-based firm.

Founded in 2013, VIMB provides healthcare services to people who are ineligible for health insurance and income-qualified.

It has offices in Pittsfield and Great Barrington.



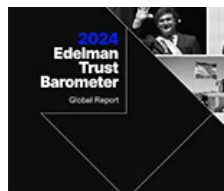
Nelson Fernandez

'TRUST' TAKES ANOTHER HIT

Trust levels in NGOs, businesses, government and media are continuing to decline in developed countries such as the US, France, Germany and UK, while many of their developing neighbors are seeing trust levels holding steady or rising.

That's the conclusion of the newly released [2024 Edelman Trust Barometer](#), which polled 32,000 respondents across 28 countries to gauge how much trust they place in their country's institutions.

China placed first, with an overall trust level of 79 percent. Despite its spot at the top of the heap, that number represents a four percent slide from the 83 percent of respondents in China who said they trusted the country's institutions to do the right thing in last year's survey. India's overall trust level rose from 73 percent to 76 percent, and the UAE held steady at 74 percent.



When the data tracks closer to home, things look a bit less positive. While Canada's overall trust level nudged up slightly from 52 percent to 53 percent, and Australia rose to 52 percent from 48 percent, the US saw a drop from 48 percent to 46 percent, and the UK dipped from 43 percent to 39 percent.

Companies based in China don't seem to benefit from the country's reputation for trust, with only 30 percent of global respondents globally saying that they trust China-based businesses. That compares rather poorly with US-based companies (with a 53 percent trust level) and Germany (62 percent).

Government regulators take a large hit in the study as well. Out of the 28 countries surveyed over half of the respondents in 26 of those countries say government regulators lack adequate understanding of emerging technologies to regulate them effectively.

To get people on board with innovations, the study emphasizes that all institutions actively listen to them. "Hear our concerns, let us ask questions" is cited as a top trust-building strategy that respondents want to see from businesses, NGOs, government and the media.

AUTO PRO TERRY DRIVES TO TELEMETRY

Chris Terry, who co-founded [Weber Shandwick](#)'s global automotive practice, has signed on at Telemetry Agency shop as VP-communications strategy.



Chris Terry

He joins the Northville, MI shop from Interpublic's Jack Morton Worldwide, where he was senior creative director on the Cadillac account.

Prior to Jack Morton, Terry was part of WPP's Ford Motor team stationed in the greater Detroit area. During his seven-year stint there, Terry handled product and corporate news and speechwriting duties.

Earlier as SVP in Weber Shandwick's Birmingham, MI-based automotive group, Terry worked on the General Motors, Honeywell and Hankook Tire North America account.

Telemetry CEO Craig Daitch called Terry a creative thinker, adept at connecting products and services with broader trends.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

The Culturist Group is engaged by The Cayuga County Office of Tourism, the official tourism promotion agency for Cayuga County, located in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York. As part of the collaboration, the office has released the results of its "Make it Count" advertising campaign, which aims to develop innovative branding, digital marketing and corporate communications strategies to drive tourism and celebrate Cayuga County and its historical core of Auburn, NY, the chosen hometown of freedom-seeker and abolitionist Harriet Tubman. "In The Culturist Group, Cayuga County found a partner who is uniquely prepared and qualified to navigate community dialogue and engagement of Black and diverse community investors," said Cayuga County Office of Tourism executive director Karen Kuhl.



[Pollock Communications](#) signs on with **Herbaland**, a Canadian-based company that produces and sells earth-friendly, high-quality supplements. The agency will be handling public relations for the company as it expands into the US. Herbaland's vitamin gummy supplements, which are made with high quality plant-based, natural ingredients and packaged in earth-friendly compostable pouches, are intended to provide a delicious and sustainable way to help fulfill daily nutritional requirements.

Gunpowder, Inc., an enthusiast lifestyle agency, adds conservation organization the **Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation** to its client roster. Gunpowder will provide public relations strategy and implementation to help RMEF advance its mission of ensuring the future of elk and other wildlife, their habitat and the country's hunting heritage. The partnership with RMEF will aim to strengthen the organization's PR capabilities, increase membership retention, assist with their 40-year anniversary plans and create a more effective PR infrastructure within the company.

Curious Plot signs on with **California Avocado Commission**. The agency will support consumer public relations as well as customized retail marketing. It will also handle consumer communication, including advertising and social media. The commission's plan is to launch a new marketing campaign supporting the 2024 California avocado season. Commission VP of marketing Terry Splane noted that during the search process, Curious Plot exhibited a blend of a strong strategic approach, excellent advertising creative, unique public relations activations and a partnership approach that melds very well with the California Avocado Commission's needs.



Colangelo & Partners is named by **Volio Imports**, an importer of wines from Italy, as agency of record for a new integrated communication program. The partnership will focus on elevating Volio Imports' brand presence, strengthening its communication channels, and fostering continued growth in the beverage industry. The collaboration will place a special emphasis on three wine brands within Volio Imports' portfolio: Berlucchi, Famiglia Cecchi and Tenuta Argenteria.

COMMENTARY

Nadal joins Saudi “sportswashing” team. Spanish tennis legend Rafael Nadal signed up on Jan. 15 to become an ambassador for the Saudi Tennis Federation.

He is the latest cog in Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s Vision 2030 master plan to transform the Kingdom into a sports powerhouse.

Human rights groups have criticized Nadal for going for the Saudi gold, but hope he will eventually do the right thing.



Rafael Nadal

Peter Frankental, economic affairs director of Amnesty International UK, urged the 22-time Grand Slam men’s singles champ to turn tables on the Saudis.

“We would urge Nadal to speak out about Saudi Arabia’s human rights record,” he said.

Fat chance of that happening.

Nadal said he’s eager to work with young Saudis. “If I can help

them pick up a racquet or simply get fit and enjoy the benefits of healthy living, then I’ll be happy to have made a difference,” he said.

My hunch is the Crown Prince is counting on Nadal to groom tennis champs and top-rated Olympic competitors. He’s not paying Nadal to become a physical ed teacher.

Evolution not revolution for AGI... OpenAI chief Sam Altman told an *Economist* webinar on Jan. 17 that progress toward artificial general intelligence will be “a slow take-off” with many fits and starts.

He likened it to the 2007 introduction of Apple’s iPhone. There’s only slight incremental changes made to the phones on the year-to-year basis. But if you compare the 2007 iPhone with the iPhone 15: WOW.

Altman shared the stage with Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, which has partnered with OpenAI.

Both men dismissed the idea that AGI will wipe out jobs. Nadella did concede that some jobs will be “commoditized” (e.g., wage cuts).

Altman said one thing is certain: Predictions from experts about new technologies are always wrong.

For instance, the introduction of ChatGPT triggered a two-week freak-out. People now think it is too slow, said Altman.

The Mooch rips DC’s lobbying culture. Anthony Scaramucci, who famously did a 10-day stint as president Donald Trump’s communications director, has ripped the power that DC lobbyists exert over US government policy.

At the World Economic Forum at Davos, The Mooch diverted from the discussion about the Arab future.

According to the *Jewish Insider*, he said: “If you can be bought, they give you two cigars, a bottle of Cristalle, sit in the hot tub with them.

“It’s not the weaponization of the dollar that I’m worried about, it is the control of the lobbyists over the action of what is going to happen to the US.”

Scaramucci predicted that Trump will lose in November

because he will go “crazy” over his mounting legal woes.

He believes Biden is too old for the job, but he has a great staff that gets things done.

“If we’re going to choose between dementia and demented, I’m going with dementia,” quipped Scaramucci.

Senate turns a blind eye. Senator Bernie Sanders could only get ten of his colleagues to vote for his resolution to direct the State Dept. to conduct a report on whether Israel’s military is committing human rights violations in Gaza.

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 requires that any nation receiving military aid from the US must comply with internationally-recognized human rights laws.

If they don’t, Congress can cut off the weapons flow.

Sanders noted that his resolution was a simple request for information. It did not alter military assistance in any fashion.

The US supply of weaponry to Israel—no-questions asked—has damaged America’s reputation throughout the world.

Sanders tried to undo the damage.

Opioid work hit batters McKinsey & Co. The management consultant reports a 22.7 percent drop in fiscal 2023 federal revenues to \$54.9M—the lowest level since 2014.

The *Financial Times* attributes McKinsey’s fall from US revenues grace due to its involvement in the Purdue Pharma opioid scandal.

It has paid more than \$900M to settle legal claims for its role in the opioid crisis.

McKinsey chalked up \$114M in revenues in federal revenues in 2018, which was its all-time high.

Watch out PR, here come the ‘deinfluencers.’ [Bloomberg has reported](#) on the rise of social media deinfluencers who encourage their followers not to buy so much junk.

Rejecting overhyped trends and materialism, deinfluencers often simply ask if a product is worth it. The rise of fast fashion also has spurred the rise of deinfluencers.

They point out the low quality of the merchandise, and shed light on the human rights violations that take place in the factories that produce the garments.

Of course, deinfluencers could benefit from the same PR counsel that made influencers online celebrities.

Deinfluencers could be a potential gold mine for PR. How’s that for playing both sides of the marketing game?

Edelman’s Koch Connection... [The Guardian](#) chides Edelman for ranking as one of the Charles Koch Foundation’s top five professional contractors in 2022.

The Foundation runs afoul of Edelman’s pledge not to work for climate warming deniers. Edelman received \$107,750 from the Foundation, according to its disclosure form.

That’s pocket change for the world’s biggest PR firm.

Edelman says it no longer works for the Foundation.

The Guardian may want to do a follow-up on Edelman’s work for Saudi Arabia on behalf of promoting Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s NEOM city-of-the-future project.

That’s where the big bucks are.

—Kevin McCauley