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CALIFORNIA ISSUES \$200M ANTI-TOBACCO RFP

The California Tobacco Control Program has put its \$200M five-year advertising budget up for grabs.



The ad effort will face off against the more than \$1M an hour that Big Tobacco spends to attract new customers and keep current ones addicted.

The RFP notes that the most effective anti-tobacco media efforts 1) educate users and nonusers about the impact of secondhand smoke/vape; 2) highlight the environmental damage brought on by tobacco use; 3) spotlight Big Tobacco's marketing efforts; and 4) outline the overall magnitude of tobacco's harmful effects.

California wants a full-service ad agency that can produce an effective multicultural and multilingual media campaign.

It will consider pitches from California-based agencies with minimum \$75M in annual gross billings and 30 employees without conflicts stemming from tobacco, e-cigarette, cannabis or related industry clients.

The 60-month contract will begin Sept. 30.

Agencies must submit their capabilities by June 22.

They go to: Request for Proposals 22-10146; California Department of Public Health; California Tobacco Control Program; Attention: Jennifer Garcia; MS 7206; 616 Capitol Avenue, Suite 74516; Sacramento, CA 95814

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

BRUNSWICK HIRES EX-AMBASSADOR REISS

Brunswick Group has named Ambassador Mitchell Reiss to co-lead its geopolitical practice. Based in DC, he will work with fellow geopolitical co-lead Kate Fall in London.



Mitchell Reiss

Reiss worked in the State Dept. from 2003 to 2005 as director of the Office of Policy Planning and served as George W. Bush's special envoy for the Northern Ireland Peace Process.

Most recently, Reiss was the UK representative to the Independent Reporting Commission on paramilitary operations in Northern Ireland.

Reiss also served as president of Washington College and helmed the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

He was national security advisor to Mitt Romney during his presidential run.

SAUDI MINISTRY OF CULTURE TAPS EDELMAN

[Edelman](#) has inked a one-year \$800K contract to provide PR services to Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Culture.

The effort calls for the forging of stakeholder and shareholder partnerships; media relations and social media development and outreach in the US.

Edelman will also create a communications toolkit, which details how to categorize a crisis, the escalation protocol, roles & responsibilities and messaging.

Established in 2018, the MoC's goal is "to contribute to building a vibrant, thriving and ambitious nation," according to its website. It plans a crucial role in delivering on Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's "Vision 2030" transformation program.

BONITATIBUS REPLACES RAFFERTY AT WF

Embattled Wells Fargo has named Amy Bonitatibus CCO and brand officer effective Sept. 1

She will report to vice chairman Bill Daley and handle duties once held by former Ketchum CEO Barri Rafferty, who was hired in June 2020.

Bonitatibus joins Wells Fargo from JPMorgan's Chase retail unit, where she served as chief communications officer.

Prior to Chase, Bonitatibus was senior director at Fannie Mae, where she managed executive communications and media relations. She also was deputy press secretary for Senator Hillary Clinton.



Amy Bonitatibus

RF|BINDER UPS REBECCA BINDER TO PREXY

Rebecca Binder, who joined [RF|Binder](#) in 2018 as senior managing director, strategic initiatives, has been promoted to president at the family-owned firm.

Prior to joining the PR firm, Binder spent more than a decade at consulting firms Innosight and Booz Allen Hamilton, handling strategic planning, process improvement, risk management and performance monitoring.

At RF|Binder, she expanded its strategic communications, content creation, digital media, data and analytics offerings.



Rebecca Binder

AMERICANS DIVIDED ON ‘CANCEL CULTURE’

The term “cancel culture” has become incredibly popular—and increasingly politicized—in recent years. Unfortunately, many of us fail to agree on what the concept means.



accountable or if it’s a form of unjust punishment.

According to Pew’s survey, nearly two-thirds of Americans (61 percent) said they’re aware of the phrase “cancel culture,” a 17-percentage point increase compared to the less than half (44 percent) who said the same when asked about the term during a previous Pew survey a year ago.

Americans remain divided on whether calling out others on social media for posting offensive content is a form of accountability or punishment, but a growing number of Democrats are beginning to agree with Republicans that it’s the latter.

When broken out by party affiliation, Democrats are nearly twice as likely to see “cancel culture” as a means of holding people accountable for posting content that might be considered offensive (65 percent), compared to only about a third (34 percent) of Republicans who agree. Republicans, conversely, are more likely to view the practice as a form of punishing people who don’t deserve it (62 percent), with less than a third (32 percent) of Democrats holding that view.

The Pew study found that women are more likely than men to view the practice of calling out people on social media as a means of holding them accountable (56 percent vs. 45 percent), while men are more likely to say this behavior unfairly punishes people (52 percent vs. 38 percent). A majority of white Americans polled said they believe this behavior generally punishes people who don’t deserve it (51 percent), while Black Americans (71 percent), Hispanics (61 percent) and Asians (61 percent) largely see it as a form of accountability.

Research for Pew’s study was based on a survey of an undisclosed number of U.S. adults and was conducted between April 25 and May 1.

OHIO CO. SEEKS COVID-19 LITERACY PUSH

Ohio’s Franklin County wants to hire a firm for a COVID-19 literacy campaign to reduce health disparities and improve outcomes among racial and ethnic minorities.

The County of 1.2M people includes the Buckeye State’s capital city of Columbus.

Its Public Health Dept. wants a partner to build upon existing outreach to elevate communications, education and marketing activities focused on COVID-19 vaccines.

Its aim is to combat COVID-19 misinformation concerning booster effectiveness, pediatric vaccinations and “test-to-treat” options, according to the RFP.

The effort will target at-risk populations based on social vulnerability index scores, vaccine uptake and other available data.

The project will kick off July 13 and run through November 30. Responses are due June 17 at mitzikline@franklincountyohio.gov.

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



NEWS OF FIRMS

Teneo launches its **People Advisory** brand, which brings together Ridgeway (acquired by Teneo in January 2021), Anna Whitlam People (which Teneo acquired in August 2021) and the firm’s U.S. Talent businesses. It is jointly led by Diane McIntyre in the U.S., Sue O’Brien in the UK and Anna Whitlam in Asia Pacific. The brand will operate in such areas as executive search, board advisory, and culture and organizational transformation.

Evoke is combining with **Ashfield Health’s** marketing and communications agencies to form one platform that will operate under the Evoke name. The combined unit employs more than 1,400 people across 12 healthcare-focused agencies. It will be led by Evoke CEO and founder Reid Connolly, with former Ashfield Health global president Amar Urhekar taking on the role of global president for marketing and advertising specialty agencies and former Evoke Kyne CEO David Kyne serving as global president for communications and PR specialty agencies.

Outbloom PR teams up with content marketing firm **Allegro Solutions** to form a partnership focused on delivering coordinated public relations and content services in the cybersecurity industry. In addition, the companies have started up the Driving Diversity Program, which offers discounted services from either Outbloom PR, Allegro Solutions or through the partnership for stealth, seed and Series A cybersecurity and technology startup whose founders and/or leadership teams consist of individuals from historically excluded or underrepresented groups.

FINN Partners is partnering with the **Future Communicators Foundation**, which is administered by The PR Trust, on a new four-year scholarship program. The Future Communicators Foundation Scholarships, which are aimed at furthering communication skills around social justice, sustainability and civil society, are also supported by **fischerAppelt** (Germany), **SPRG** (Hong Kong) and **Adfactors PR** (India). Each agency has committed to providing \$10,000 in scholarships over the next four years. The scholarships will be available at universities selected by the funding partners.

Whyte Corporate Affairs, an independent Belgian communications agency, has been elected to partnership in **PROI Worldwide**. Founded in 2008, Whyte has offices in Brussels and Antwerp, as well as subsidiary businesses Twyst for consumer PR and StudioTokyo for design. The agency provides services including corporate communications, public affairs, crisis communications and issues management to Belgium-based businesses and international firms with operations in the country.

MikeWorldWide launches its UK PR internship and accelerator program—LEAP (Learn, Earn and Progress). Working in partnership with youth mentoring charity Shadow to Shine, the internship will include bootcamp-style learning, mentorship and hands-on experience, covering MWW’s key practice areas: disruptive technology, brand marketing, purpose and digital. “We are really excited about this partnership and the skills and opportunities the LEAP programme will offer,” said Shadow to Shine CEO Korinna Williams.



CORPORATE ACTIVISM: BE CAUTIOUS

Cheered on by many in the [media](#) and [large PR firms](#), corporate activism has been on the rise for years. It has particularly accelerated in the past year or two. However, what is almost always missing from this discussion is any concern or deliberation about corporate activism's [consequences and potential pitfalls](#).



Nick Kalm

As a communications counselor who has spent my entire career trying to help companies escape, overcome or avoid controversies, I'm a bit mystified and disappointed by the "groupthink" in my industry that ignores or downplays these risks. And as a contrarian, I am always skeptical when conventional wisdom suggests only one path forward.

The fact is, our country is bitterly divided on issue after issue. In many cases, it's an almost even split. A company staking a position on almost anything is virtually certain to provoke an equally negative reaction from a significant portion of the country.

I'm not saying that companies should never take a position on a societal issue, but they shouldn't do it rashly or without careful analysis and deliberation.

A number of studies show that consumers and employees want companies to get involved in political issues. A few other surveys qualify that in important ways: yes, they want companies to get involved in political issues, but [only if the companies' views align with their own](#). Okay...[with the country divided about 50-50](#), how is that supposed to work?

So, is doing nothing an option? Should companies listen to their most vocal employees or customers? What if those vocal groups or individuals represent only a minority, but are just the loudest and grabbing all the attention? These are just a few of the questions companies should be asking themselves.

Here's a checklist for companies to consider when weighing whether or not to become involved in societal issues.

Organizational Assessment

- Why are we considering taking a position?
- Is our organization historically known for taking political or controversial stands? If not, are we comfortable now being seen as such an organization?
- Are we prepared to answer the question: "Why are we speaking up now?"
- Does taking this position align with our corporate values, mission or policies?
- Do we have the resources and are we prepared to commit them to make a meaningful impact on this issue?
- Would taking this or any similar position be the first time we have done so externally or internally? If we spoke up before, what was the reaction the last time?

Impact on Key Stakeholders

- Have we heard (i.e., survey results, social chatter, internal "rumblings," etc.) and/or received direct feedback about this issue from any of our key stakeholders?
- If we are encouraged to take this position based on encouragement/pressure from our employees, customers, legislators or advocacy groups, do we know whether those bringing the pressure represent a significant minority or majority of that group—or if it is just a vocal, small minority?
- Do we know how these key stakeholders will react to us

taking such a position: Board of directors, leadership team, employees, customers, business partners/referral sources, government officials, investors, current/prospective employees, legal team/counsel?

- Has our industry/trade association already taken a position or set an expectation that we will be judged against?

Forward-looking Considerations

- If we are considering aligning ourselves with an advocacy group, have we investigated them thoroughly first?
 - Are we ready to go "all-in" on this issue? In other words, are we potentially prepared to execute a prolonged advocacy strategy supporting and advocating this position in the form of advocacy group partnerships, financial contributions to non-profits/impacted communities, creation of employee resource groups to help make a difference and related efforts?
 - If we receive pressure based on taking this position, are we prepared to stick it out no matter what?
 - What upsides—financial or otherwise—are we expecting to receive as a result of taking or not taking this position? How do we know that will come true?
 - Are we prepared for the possibility of, and have we quantified the possibility of, lost shareholder value, lost sales, lost government incentives/tax breaks, lost reputation and/or difficulty recruiting or retaining employees as a result of us taking or not taking this position?

Nick Kalm is founder and president of [Reputation Partners](#).

MCCOOK RETURNS TO RUBENSTEIN PR

John McCook, who worked 17 years at [Rubenstein Public Relations](#) in two different stints, has returned to the New York shop as VP and head of its consumer practice.

He exited RPR in 2018 to teach special education classes at PS 89 and Metropolitan High School in the South Bronx.

McCook also saw PR duty at Hill+Knowlton Strategies, Burson-Marsteller and Porter Novelli.

During his career, he counseled clients such as Wish-Bone Salad Dressing, Puerto Rico Tourism, Applebee's, Le Cordon Bleu Cooking School, Mazda, Rubin Museum of Art, Mount Airy Casino and AMF Bowling.



John McCook

WESTERN IL WORKS WANTS TO HIRE PR FIRM

Western Illinois Works wants to hire a communications firm to promote its workforce development efforts in nine rural counties.

The non-profit organization administers the state-funded Workforce Innovation Board of Western Illinois.

It promotes training and job development in Adams, Brown, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, Pike, Schuyler and Warren counties.

WIW wants a PR partner to bolster awareness of its business services, and assist in job seeker recruitment and school youth training via social media outreach and development of content for newsletters and Facebook.

It offers a one-year contract with two possible one-year extension periods.

Proposals are due June 23 at lwa14@grics.net.

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

JAMAICA'S FOREIGN MINISTER TAPS FINN

[Finn Partners](#) is providing PR, media relations and thought leadership services to Kamina Johnson Smith, who is Jamaica's minister of foreign affairs and trade.



Kamina Johnson Smith

She has been campaigning to replace Patricia Scotland of Dominica as secretary-general of The Commonwealth.

Johnson Smith has traveled to African Commonwealth nations including Nigeria, Botswana, Tanzania and Ghana to press her bid that reportedly has backing from the UK and India.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting is slated for Kigali, Rwanda, from June 20 to June 25. Rwanda is last nation to join the

54-member grouping of former British territories.

Finn Partners has a three-month \$99K contract with Johnson Smith that expires June 30.

It used to represent Jamaica tourism but resigned that account, which is now at Lou Hammond Group, in 2021.

Finn Partners took on The Bahamas following the split with Jamaica.

DAMOND TO EDELMAN GLOBAL ADVISORY

[Edelman](#) Global Advisory has named BIO vet Joseph Damond senior health advisor.



Joseph Damond

At the Biotechnology Innovation Organization, Damond was deputy chief policy officer and executive VP for international affairs, dealing with healthcare advocacy, economic, trade and foreign relations matters.

Previously, he served as VP-international government relations at Pfizer and deputy VP-international affairs at Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America.

He also did a more than 10-year stint as assistant US Trade Representative for Asia and the Pacific.

M&C SAATCHI DUMPS DISSIDENT DIRECTOR

M&C Saatchi has booted director Vin Murria from its board for refusing to support Next Fifteen Communications Group's \$390M cash and stock acquisition offer for the company.

Murria, founder of Advanced Computer Software, is M&C Saatchi's biggest shareholder, controlling 22.3 percent of the ad agency. Her investment group, AdvancedAdvT, made its own bid for M&C that was dismissed by the firm last month as "derisory" and an "unsolicited hostile takeover."



Vin Murria

AdvancedAdvT now claims its offer is superior to the accepted bid because NFC's stock price has dropped 13.1 percent since the deal was announced on May 20.

Though AdvancedAdvT views NFC as a "credible buyer," it believes its offer does not "reflect the value of foregoing control and the significant synergies available" to NFC.

It wants M&C's board to clarify its analysis of the financial terms of the two competing offers for the firm.

BRANDS BOOST TOGETHERNESS, SAYS FH

Brands are in a key position to foster social togetherness, according to a new study from [FleishmanHillard](#)'s TRUE Global Intelligence unit.

"[The Togetherness Economy](#)," which surveyed 2,000 adults in the US and UK (1,000 in each country) between March 30 and April 7, found that a solid majority (61 percent) of respondents feel that "brands have an important role to play when it comes to fostering togetherness in society."

That sentiment has a direct connection to the bottom line, with 70 percent of US respondents claiming that they would be more likely to buy a product if its brand promoted togetherness.

But brands appear to be coming up short in meeting the desire for messaging that promotes social togetherness. Almost half (45 percent) agreed that the way brands currently market themselves actively contributes to societal division, with only 23 percent disagreeing.

DESANTIS' REP FILES AS FOREIGN AGENT

Christina Pushaw, the combative spokesperson for Florida governor Ron DeSantis, has registered as a foreign agent for work that she did from 2018 to 2020 for Mikheil Saakashvili, ex-president of Georgia.

He headed the former Soviet republic from 2004 to 2013 and then left it to become a citizen of Ukraine.

She counseled Saakashvili on international communications and media, including assistance with TV appearances, op-eds and outreach to policymakers, according to her Justice Dept. filing.

She received compensation of \$25K and lived rent-free in an apartment in Georgia's capital of Tbilisi which was owned by an associate of Saakashvili.

Pushaw's filing refers to her one-time client as "currently incarcerated as a political prisoner in Georgia."

She belatedly filed the registration after being contacted by the Justice Department.



Christina Pushaw

POLICANO RETURNS TO RUBENSTEIN

Chris Policano, who has more than 25 years experience in NYC's labor, nonprofit and journalism worlds, has joined Rubenstein as executive VP.

Reporting to president Steven Rubenstein, Policano will handle clients in the healthcare, nonprofit and real estate categories.

Most recently, Policano was chief public information officer for Queens district attorney Melinda Katz.

His labor background comes from top PR jobs at the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Workers in DC, its largest local District Council 37 in New York and the United Federation of Teachers.

Policano also served as senior VP-communications at Phoenix House, director of communications at NYC's City Council and reporter at the *Daily News* and *New York Post*.

He began his career in 1986 as an account supervisor at Rubenstein.



Heike Galbraith

SPECTRUM SCIENCE ACQUIRES SONIC HEALTH

Health and science communications agency [Spectrum Science](#) has acquired Costa Mesa, CA-based life-sciences marketing company Sonic Health.

Terms of the acquisition were not publicly disclosed.

Sonic bills itself as a “strategic agency that applies the science of storytelling to transform corporate and brand communications.” The agency was founded in 2013 by Fabio Gratton and Ross Fetterolf. It counts Avita Medical, Moderna, Novartis and Pfizer as clients.



Jonathan Wilson

The agency will henceforth join Spectrum as the Sonic Story Lab, which aims to unite experts in advertising, digital strategy and creative story production to craft strategic storytelling that connects clients and their audiences. Fetterolf joins Spectrum as EVP and head of the Sonic Story Lab. Gratton will remain involved as a consultant, advising on select client work.

“The Sonic Story Lab will bring new perspective to scientific storytelling—a core tenant of who we are and what we do at Spectrum,” Spectrum owner and CEO Jonathan Wilson told *O’Dwyer’s*. Washington, D.C.-based Spectrum, which was founded in 1996, accounted for nearly \$49 million in net fees in 2021, according to *O’Dwyer’s rankings of PR firms*.

KEKST CNC TROTS OUT TURKEY DEAL

[Kekst CNC](#) is working for Greenwich, CT-based Atlas Holdings as it acquires family-owned Foster Farms, which markets a top-selling turkey and chicken brand in the West.

Foster, which has more than 10K people working in processing plants in California, Oregon, Washington, Louisiana and Alabama, generates about \$3B in annual sales.

Atlas has recruited Donnie Smith, former CEO of Tyson Foods, to run Foster Farms. He replaces Dan Huber, who took the top spot in 2019.

Smith said he admired what the Foster family has built over the past eight decades and plans to build on its legacy for a new era, “rooted in animal welfare, superior product quality, customer service and community engagement.”

Kekst CNC has Nathan Riggs and Shea Maney repping Atlas. Publicis Groupe owns Kekst CNC.

DENTONS GLOBAL ADVISORS RECRUITS CASEY

Pat Casey, son of popular Pennsylvania Senator and Governor Bob Casey, has joined Dentons Global Advisors as a partner in its government relations unit.



Pat Casey

Aviation Administration, partners.

The lawyer by training has more than 30 years of experience in commercial litigation, especially in areas involving labor, employment and healthcare issues.

He ran for Congress in 1998 but lost in a nailbiter to Republican Don Sherwood.

DGA also recruited from its parent company Dentons law firm. It named Michael Drobac, ex-government affairs chief at Netflix; and Gregory Walden, former chief counsel at the Federal

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

PlayWise Partners picks up **FAO Schwarz**, including the full portfolio of FAO Schwarz toys and its flagship retail store. PlayWise Partners co-founders Rachel Griffin and Sheena Stephens will lead efforts to create new opportunities for the FAO Schwarz brand. FAO Schwarz was purchased from Toys “R” Us by ThreeSixty Group in 2016, and following an eight-year absence from NYC, the company opened its new flagship location there in 2018.



Sage Growth Partners, a Baltimore-based healthcare marketing, strategy and research firm, renews its partnership to provide PR and media relations services for **ProgenyHealth**, a tech-enabled women’s healthcare company dedicated to maternity and NICU care management. SGP’s scope of work includes proactive media relations, the development of thought-leadership content, and securing national media placements and byline articles. “The team at Sage Growth Partners has continually collaborated with our leadership to develop and implement highly-effective media and public relations efforts on a national level,” said ProgenyHealth CEO and founder Dr. Ellen Stang.

EP+Co signs on as agency of record for **John Deere’s** construction division. The agency has served as AOR for Deere’s residential agriculture and turf division since 2018. EP+Co will lead the creation of a revitalized brand platform and long-term marketing strategy designed to position Deere as the category leader in reliable, innovative construction equipment. EP+Co has also been selected by global packaging solutions company Sonoco to produce a marketing asset that positions the brand’s products for buyers seeking premium materials.

Bubble Agency picks up **KILOVIEW**, a provider of IP-based video transmission solutions. The agency will work to raise the brand’s profile and create opportunities for the brand in markets including ProAV, broadcast, remote medical, education, government, house of worship, live streaming, live event and live production. “We have appointed Bubble Agency for their industry-specific strategic PR expertise and are looking forward to working with them to target crucial markets in the USA, Europe and APAC,” said KILOVIEW vice president and head of marketing and sales Judy Zuo.



Comunicacion Iberoamericana lands **Quito Tourism** in Europe, North America and South America. The agency will be in charge of implementing Quito Tourism’s new public relations, marketing and MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) strategies. It will also disseminate news about tourism and investment opportunities, support participation in trade fairs and organize events, roadshows and inspection trips for the press and tourism industry.

NextTech Communications is named public relations agency of record by **MPC: The Digital Commerce Event** for MPC22, a conference and exhibition focused on the future of alternative payments worldwide. The event is being held Aug. 22-24 at the Westin Atlanta Perimeter North. NextTech will work with the MPC22 events team to drive promotion of the conference’s programming, exhibitions, and its supporting content.

COMMENTARY

CEOs
for
Gun
Safety

PR people talk a good game when it comes to ESG matters with one glaring exception: gun control.

The profession is mostly a no-show on the “[CEOs For Gun Safety](#)” letter urging the Senate to take immediate action on gun safety legislation.

More than 220 CEOs signed the letter that calls gun violence an epidemic that represents a public health crisis that continues to devastate communities, especially Black and Brown ones.

It states: “*On top of the human toll is a profound economic impact. At a time when our economy is struggling to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, gun violence costs American taxpayers, employers and communities a staggering \$280 billion per year.*”

Only ten PR leaders put their names on the letter.

Here’s the honor roll: Mark Read (WPP), Richard Edelman ([Edelman](#)), Gabrielle Zucker/Aaron Kwitken (KWT Global), Donna LaVoie ([LaVoieHealthScience](#)), Jess Fiaschette (Outside PR); Michael Kempner ([MikeWorldWide](#)), Melissa Waggener Zorkin (WE Communications), Mallory Blair (Small Girls PR) and Andrew Bleeker (Bully Pulpit Interactive).

Thanks for taking a stand. Your colleagues should follow your lead.

The frightful specter of Donald Trump hovers over the war in Ukraine. That’s why some European leaders are calling for negotiations to end the conflict, said Ed Carr, deputy editor-in-chief at *The Economist*, at a June 10 webinar sponsored by the British magazine.

Time is running out.

They know the Ukraine/Russian war is not going to end in “total defeat” like that of Adolf Hitler in WWII. The mentality is “sooner or later the war is going to end, so Ukraine should strike its best deal as soon as possible,” said Carr.

The Europeans fear that the return of Trump to the White House would result in the US withdrawing its support for Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky.

Though France has supplied sophisticated Caesar self-propelled artillery systems in Ukraine, its president Emmanuel Macron is in frequent phone contact with Vladimir Putin.

Macron has warned his western allies about the dangers of humiliating Putin with a military defeat.

“He doesn’t want to rile Putin up” because he could escalate the conflict, said Carr.

Carr said Putin, like Trump, believes his own lies.

Russia’s leader is not interested in the “truth.” He creates his own reality, believing in whatever he says at the moment.

“Power and assertiveness trump truth,” said Carr.

What a tool... Former US Open champ Graeme McDowell, who ditched the PGA Tour in favor of Saudi Arabia-backed LIV Golf, told the London media he isn’t very troubled about being used by the Kingdom in its effort to “sportswash” the killing of DC Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

The CIA has determined that Saudi Arabia’s leader Mo-

ammed bin Salman ordered the hit on Khashoggi.

Calling the “Khashoggi situation” reprehensible, McDowell said, “But we are golfers. If Saudi Arabia wanted to use the game of golf as a way for them to get to where they want to be and they have the resources to accelerate that experience, I think we’re proud to help them on that journey.”

Asked about Saudi Arabia’s lousy human rights record, McDowell said: “If we tried to cure geopolitical situations in every country in the world that we play golf in, we wouldn’t play a lot of golf.”

How do you sleep at night, Graeme?

Don’t grovel, Joe. Six powerful Democratic leaders have provided talking points to president Joe Biden, who feels it’s necessary to visit Saudi Arabia next month to convince the Kingdom’s de facto leader Mohammed bin Salman to ramp up oil production.

Their letter to Biden says Saudi Arabia’s failure to stabilize energy markets is bankrolling Vladimir Putin’s war crimes in Ukraine while inflicting economic pain on Americans. They want the Saudis to end their support for the war in Yemen and end the arbitrary detention of human rights activists.

The Committee Chairpersons Adam Schiff, Bennie Thompson, Carolyn Maloney, Adam Smith, Gregory Meeks and Stephen Lynch also demand accountability—in line with established global legal standards—for the murder of Washington Post contributor Jamal Khashoggi.

Since US intelligence agencies held MBS responsible for the murder and dismemberment of Khashoggi, that’s a big ask for Joe.

Raytheon Technologies joins the club. It is now an official member of the military-industrial-congressional complex as it plans to move its corporate headquarters from Waltham, MA to Arlington, VA to better curry favor with Pentagon brass and the defense industry’s paymasters.

CEO Greg Hayes, who joined Raytheon with its 2021 acquisition of United Technologies, likes the Virginia location because it increases the company’s “agility in supporting US government and commercial aerospace customers” and is a “convenient travel hub.”

Boeing CEO David Calhoun didn’t stress agility as a reason for the move. He said northern Virginia makes sense due to “its proximity to our customers and stakeholders.” He left out “Congressional patrons.”

Calhoun also believes the Arlington area is brimming with engineering and technical talent, as if Chicago is some backwater.

Once Raytheon and Boeing settle in at their new digs, the nation’s five top defense contractors will be located in the military-industrial-congressional heartland.

Northrop Grumman is based in Falls Church, VA. General Dynamics calls Reston, VA home. Lockheed Martin is headquartered in Bethesda, MD.

The consolidation of the Big Five defense contractors is a dream come true for DC PA and lobbying communities. Let the good times roll!

—Kevin McCauley