

COP, LOOK, LISTEN

ISSUE 2 | Wednesday November

Hi,

Welcome to the second edition of **COP, LOOK, LISTEN** in 2022, a bulletin covering information attacks and anti-climate communication trends in and around COP27.

We welcome requests from journalists, civil society and policymakers to provide evidence where relevant. If you have a lead regarding climate mis-/disinformation, malign influence operations or other suspicious activity, please email contact@caad.info. All requests will be reviewed from both an ethical and technical perspective, ensuring data is used responsibly to map and counter these threats.

To subscribe to **COP, LOOK, LISTEN**, please register [here](#).

‘Where Are They Now?’: Online Worlds Collide

Two of the figures profiled in CAAD’s *[Deny, Deceive, Delay](#)* report were **Jordan B. Peterson** (combined audience of ~17m on Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and TikTok) and **Bjorn Lomborg** (regularly cited by media, including a COP-related column for the Wall Street Journal in 2021).

Their online profiles are indicative of key accounts documented in our research under two pillars: **Climate Influencers and Non-Climate Influencers**. The former (such as Lomborg) represents climate-specific pundits or self-declared experts, who generally receive less traction online but post more consistently on the issue. They are central in providing a veneer of academic credibility to wider misinformation and discourses of delay, especially in the mainstream press.

The Telegraph News Sport Business Opinion Ukraine Money Life Style Travel Culture Puzzles

Royals UK news Politics World Health Defence Science Education Environment Investigations Global Health Security

COMMENT

Pushing the same old climate policies at COP27 is simply insane

After decades of failure to curb emissions, let's accept that capitalist investment is not the problem: it's the solution

BJØRN LOMBORG | JORDAN PETERSON

4 November 2022 • 5:00pm

The latter (such as Peterson), includes highly-followed personalities who discuss climate as part of a larger conservative or 'anti-woke' agenda, often conflating climate policy with other contentious issues from Critical Race Theory and pandemic response to abortion and transgender rights.

Last year, we found that the two groups were increasingly sharing content and finding common cause online, and it would now appear that the merger is complete. Forthcoming network maps from Graphika show **the two communities are now so thoroughly overlapping they have become indistinguishable in terms of accounts followed, content shared and other analysis metrics**.

Lomborg and Peterson themselves are working together, recently co-authoring [an op-ed in the UK Telegraph](#) that falsely claims "tackling climate change with current technology is essentially impossible." As President of the Union of Concerned Scientists, [Johanna Chao Kreilik, has said](#): "it is everything *but* the technology that's impeding progress." In the piece, they also call for delaying current mitigation measures (i.e. renewables) and instead investing money in research and development.

To note: A [study in Nature Climate Change](#) found as much as 80% of emissions from building, industry, transport and food can be reduced through efficiency, dietary choices and other

demand-reduction measures already, while also prioritising people's overall wellbeing.

The arguments here are key to the ‘Delayist Playbook’: feigning concern for climate generally while also setting impossible expectations of climate solutions (see useful analysis [here](#) and [here](#)). When the challenge then appears too great, such pundits will declare a Net Zero transition impossible and suggest we go back to the drawing board (maintaining the status quo in the interim).

Fossil Fuel Apologists: ‘Sorry, We Didn’t Have A Choice’



Within this broad narrative, climate delayists are **insinuating** that the “climate agenda” is somehow **“dead”** as a result of the energy crisis, meaning that countries have (or should) abandon their transition to renewables and acknowledge the irreplaceable nature of fossil fuels.



Rep. Lauren Boebert 
@RepBoebert

...

China is increasing its coal production by 300 million tons to avoid a repeat of last year’s power shortages.

Meanwhile, the U.S. continues to virtue signal, buying their solar materials and minerals from Chinese-controlled mines where 40,000 kids dig with their bare hands.

668 Retweets 58 Quote Tweets 2,205 Likes



Paul Joseph Watson ✓
@PrisonPlanet



China is building more coal plants than the rest of the world combined.

Why is her message always directed at us and never them?



Javier Blas ✓ @JavierBlas · Oct 11

German TV interview with climate activist @GretaThunberg

Are the nuclear power plants the better choice for the time being now?

"If we have them already running, I feel that it's a mistake to close them down in order to focus on coal."

#EnergyCrisis



One of the most widely shared tweets from 17 October - 1 November 1 in this narrative came from Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene on October 11. It continued to gain traction through the end of the month and was likely a reaction to a TV [interview](#) in which Greta Thunberg suggested Germany would be ill-advised to close down functioning nuclear power plants because it would make the country more reliant on coal.

In the days before and following Thunberg's interview, several influential media, industry and political accounts that are known for pushing denialism and delay made similar statements, garnering thousands of likes and shares - this includes [US Rep. Lauren Boebert](#) and conspiracist [Paul Joseph Watson](#).

Content strongly aligns with a number of trends highlighted around COP26, such as Absolutionism, as well co-option of language around 'neo-colonialism', 'imperialism', human rights and equity to justify inaction on climate (imagine Climate Justice rhetoric in reverse - more on that in future bulletins!).

The influence of two climate contrarians who helped pioneer these talking points, Alex Epstein and Bjorn Lomborg, is clear. Epstein, for example, maintains that renewable energy policies are preventing "[human flourishing](#)," a phrase other delayers have since [adopted](#).

Epstein and Lomborg have long been promoting this idea, and have now applied it to their reactions surrounding the energy crisis since COP26.

Lomborg has written several op-eds in the [Wall Street Journal](#), [The New York Post](#), [The Australian](#), [Financial Post](#), [Economic Times](#), and [The Globe and Mail](#). In one piece he writes: **"this November's United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Egypt will offer even more breathtaking hypocrisy than usual**, because the world's rich will zealously lecture poor countries about the dangers of fossil fuels – after themselves devouring massive amounts of new gas, coal, and oil."

While pundits like Bjorn and Epstein feign concern for Africa to sell them fossil fuels, climate activists like [Vanessa Nakate make it clear their opinion is not widely shared](#).

Pro-Kremlin Propaganda Networks



Yesterday's bulletin offered an overview of how the Russian invasion of Ukraine has disrupted the energy industry. Today we'll show you how disinformation travels through pro-Russian networks and influencers, with a case study of conspiracism suggesting the UK PM and US Secretary of State secretly coordinated to sabotage the Nord Stream pipeline.

On 30 October, a [tweet](#) by [convicted fraudster](#) and [political activist Kim Dotcom](#) stated that (now former) UK PM Liz Truss had texted US Secretary of State Antony Blinken a minute after the Nord Stream pipeline exploded with the message “it’s done”. The original tweet garnered more than **18.9K retweets and 51.8K likes** and spread quickly among pro-Kremlin and pro-China communities on Twitter and Telegram.

On 1 November, the claim was then picked up by **Russia’s Foreign Ministry** via Maria Zakharova, who [announced on her Telegram channel](#) that she had been awaiting an answer from London on whether Truss sent the message and about the UK’s wider involvement in the incident.

The news was then widely [picked up by Russian state media](#), including RT, Sputnik, RBK and Lenta, who have linked a separate exposé surrounding [Truss’ phone being hacked](#) with the claim around Nord Stream. Ironically, Kim Dotcom’s tweet states that the so-called leaked message is how “Russians” knew about the sabotage, while [Russian media articles](#) mention Dotcom as the source of intel.

On 2 November activity spiked on Twitter when the American far-left website MintPress News also picked up the claim, receiving thousands of retweets in just a few hours. **On Telegram, the claim has been widely picked up and translated into different languages including Hungarian, German, and Italian.** British politician and broadcaster George Galloway also cited the claim in his podcast MOATS (Episode 183,

minute 2) stating that the message is proof “the British” were behind the attack.



Jim Rickards @JamesGRickards · Sep 28

...

I don't know who blew up the Nord Stream pipelines. I do know that when solving a mystery, you look for motives. Russia has none; they can turn off the gas when they want. The U.S. has plenty: Blame Putin, escalate the war, advance green agenda, make EU dependent. Go from there.



4,278

17.5K

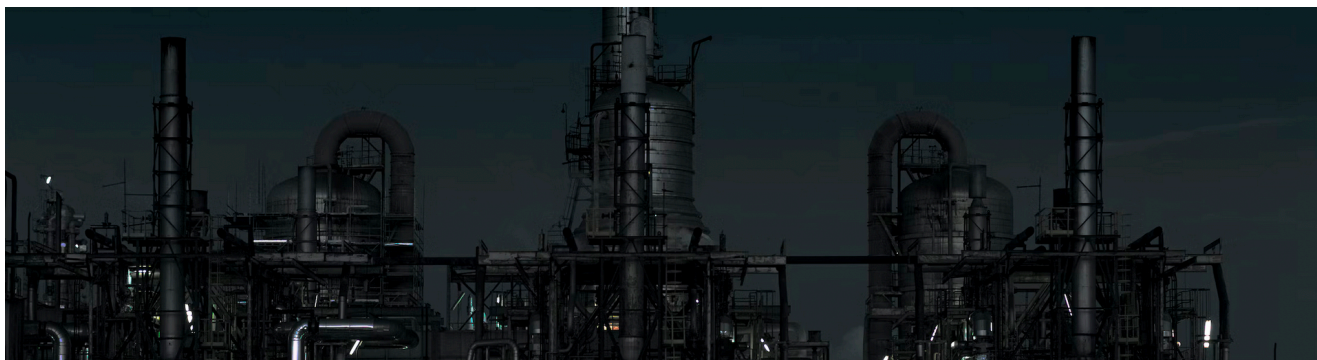
54.5K



This is not the first time that Russia has openly blamed the US or UK for the explosions, or fuelled speculation about the war in relation to ‘green agendas’. **In September, the Kremlin blamed** NATO and other Western countries for Nord Stream incidents. **Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov also openly accused** the US for acts of sabotage, stating that the country has the military-technological capabilities to carry out such actions and would be the primary beneficiary from them.

This claim resonated with different communities. On 28 September 2022, **American economist and well-known conspiracy theorist James Rickards raised suspicions** about the US’ motivations to blow up the pipelines stating, among them the green agenda (~55k likes).

Petrochemical States: Greenwashing Abound



Given their importance to climate diplomacy, and the gas lobby in particular this year, CAAD is monitoring the accounts of state-owned fossil fuel companies, Government officials and other affiliated networks across 21 countries, including OPEC members.



In this video, President Maduro criticizes the global north for backtracking on their emissions reduction commitments under the Paris Agreement and positions himself with the G77+China bloc in terms of mitigation finance for countries in the Global South. As of 7 November it had 1.9k likes and 3.1k retweets.

Our takeaway thus far? A lot of PR touting credentials as ‘green champions’, except for Nigeria which openly celebrates oil.

In the first two days of COP27 we observed a considerable increase in online activity in the petrostate and fossil actor community. From 5-8 November we picked up over **6k records from 399 accounts** - this activity has largely been dominated by accounts affiliated with

the [petrostate Venezuela](#), who were responsible for over a third of those posts.

Their high engagement can be attributed to President Nicolas Maduro's [arrival](#) in Sharm el-Sheikh, his [opening remarks](#), as well as a [meeting](#) with President Macron. Catering principally to a Spanish-speaking and domestic audience, the posts emphasize Venezuela's role and international engagement on climate change.

In addition, [posts](#) highlight the ideological struggle against capitalism and the environmental destruction it has caused. ([According to Reuters](#), in August of 2022 Venezuela exported "760,710 barrels per day (bpd) of crude and refined products, and some 256,000 tonnes of byproducts.")

Nigeria: In one higher traction [post](#) from Nigeria, President Buhari praised the completion of new petroleum infrastructure. The CEO of the state-owned oil company NNPC also [promoted](#) a refinery rehabilitation project (over 200 shares). At the same time, an advisor to the president, [retweeted](#) by the Minister of Power, praised the completion of a hydroelectric dam.

Saudi Arabia: The Saudi Foreign Minister promoted his country's [net zero goals](#) and [COP27 sideline events](#), retweeted by the official Ministry account and the Saudi Green Initiative. Similarly, UAE government accounts [promoted](#) the country's partnership with the US on accelerating Clean Energy.

UAE: Host of the next COP28, the United Arab Emirates [noted](#) their role and involvement in driving climate action and support for the Egyptian COP presidency.

India: In the last fortnight senior government ministers strongly promoted green tech projects and climate action more broadly. PM Modi [posted](#) about the importance of safeguarding against climate change impacts (12k likes, 4k shares) and was retweeted by his Ministers for Coal, Petroleum, Commerce and Industry, and Foreign Affairs, as well as the official [account](#) of the Ministry for Climate Change. Similar Modi posts related to solar energy projects (6k shares, 2k [shares](#)), environmentalism and sustainable development (8.2 likes, 2.5k [shares](#)) were all retweeted by Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi.

In parallel, India's Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri was interviewed on CNN about his country's purchases of Russian Oil. The minister retweeted two high performing clips (over [10k](#) and [6k](#) shares respectively), both of which called out the European Union for its double

standards in the [debate](#). Lower traction posts of the minister's statement were retweeted by four of India's oil companies ([ONGC](#), GAIL, [Indian Oil Corp](#), [Hindustan Petroleum](#)).

This serves as a reminder: in the wake of ongoing war in Ukraine and resulting energy crises, arguments around credibility can weigh particularly heavy. Our report on COP26 highlighted the prominent use and abuse of so-called 'absolutionist' narratives, which draw on perceived inaction by neighbouring or major powers to argue against climate action at home.

Pushback on Institutions: The New 'Climate Villains'

Climate deniers are using **multiple tactics** to undermine the scientific consensus, including "conversion stories," "scientist sign-ons" that do not require vetting, and falsehoods or exaggerations about the impact of climate change policy on daily life. Prominent examples of the latter include:



Toby Young ✓
@toadmeister



Scientists continue to flock to sign the World Climate Declaration that states there is no climate emergency, with over 200 people signing the WCD over the last few weeks, including 20 university professors.



dailysceptic.org

“There is no Climate Emergency”: Hundreds More Sign the World Climate Decl...
Scientists continue to flock to sign the World Climate Declaration that states there is no climate emergency. Over 200 people

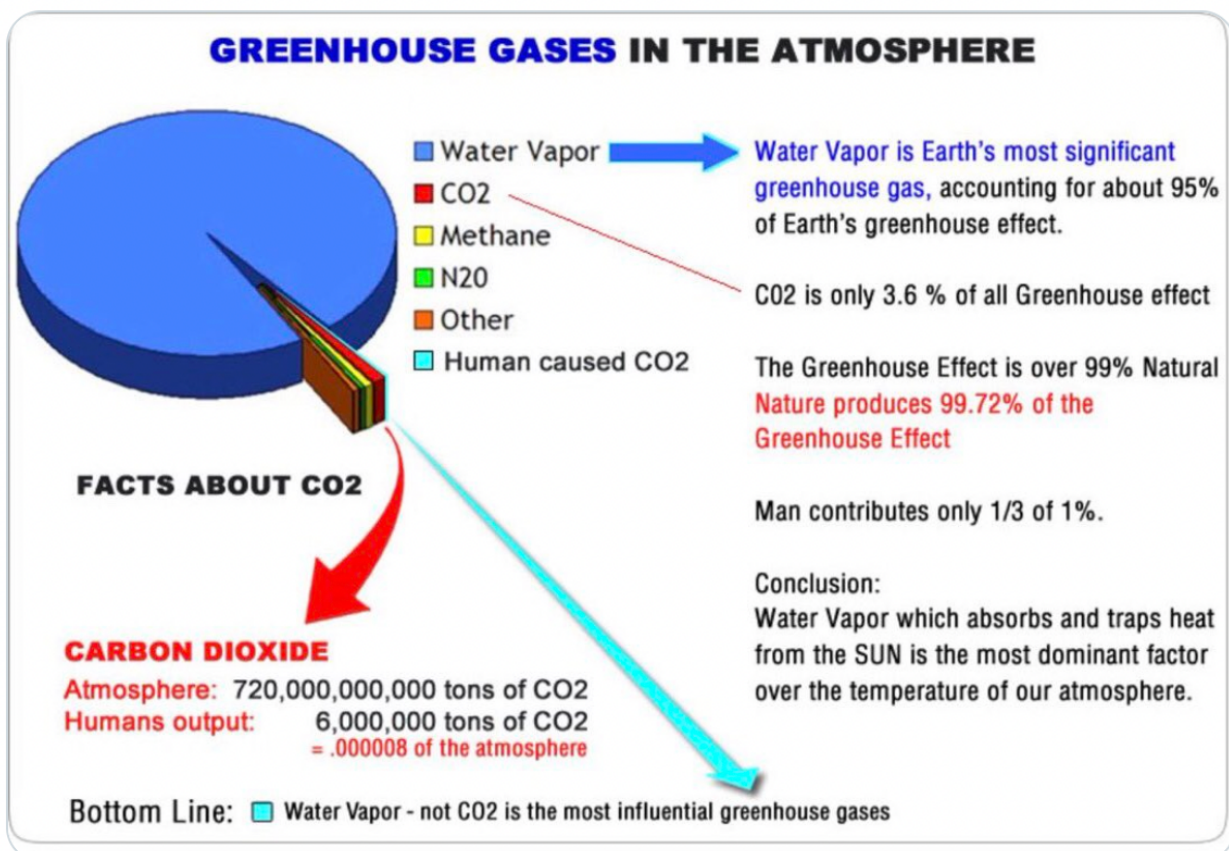
3:46 PM · Oct 31, 2022 · Buffer



Peter Clack
@PeterDClack

...

A campaign of disinformation & fake science over greenhouse gas is the greatest hoax in history. It's a bid to shift the balance of world power by the United Nations & World Economic Forum using a fear campaign about oil/gas/coal energy. This has led to global economic collapse.



11:08 PM · Oct 20, 2022 · Twitter for Android

On October 20, **Fox News Host Laura Ingraham** [shared an interview](#) on Facebook with long-established denier and tobacco company strategist [Tom Harris](#), in which he claimed to be a “former alarmist.” The post received more than 250k views and 1.6k likes.

On October 30, UK pundit Toby Young [tweeted](#): “Scientists continue to flock to sign the World Climate Declaration that states there is no climate emergency, with over 200 people signing the WCD over the last few weeks, including 20 university professors. <https://t.co/vcX6u0KGAQ>”. The post has been shared more than 5.4k times.

On conspiracism, we see more of the usual accounts, [spreading anti-WEF conspiracies](#), [complaining about room temperature](#) and [attacking Greta Thunberg](#). In fact, there has been such a resurgence of harassment of Thunberg, that it's going to be the subject of a future bulletin.

There is also an overlap between this form of narrative and content targeting the science. We collected 54 instances of users resharing a highly popular [tweet](#) originally posted in July 2022, which contained a short clip from a CNN interview in which Weather Channel co-founder John Coleman claimed climate change is a hoax. The video itself [stems from 2014](#). The July 2022 post has amassed over 28k retweets and 65k likes.

This ‘long tail’ of retweets highlights the prolonged shelf-life such viral posts can have, [even when fact-checked](#).

Finally, climate denialism that challenges the scientific evidence is also still present and finding an audience. Examples include known entities like [Steve Milloy](#) (5k Likes, 2k RT) and [Peter Clack](#) (4k Likes, 2k RT).

Much of the intel in this bulletin was powered by [Beam](#) - an award-winning system developed by CASM Technology and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue to track and confront information threats online. The bespoke climate dashboards used by CAAD collate, enrich, and visualise data from around 3000 actors across climate denial, political, media, industry, influencer and conspiracy ecosystems online, as well as over 250 media outlets worldwide. The system also analyses millions of posts across 4Chan, Facebook, Instagram, MediaCloud, Reddit, Telegram, Twitter and YouTube to capture content broadly related to COP27, as well as discussions

around specific policy areas such as Loss and Damage. Complementary tools from Dewey Square Group, [CARDS](#), Graphika and the University of Exeter have provided invaluable analysis in tandem.

Media Requests

If you are a media outlet or a journalist with a data request, or in need of a spokesperson, please feel free to get in contact with our team at contact@caad.info, who will do their best to assist with any requests.



Climate Action
Against Disinformation



ISD

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to extremism
and polarisation



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