

# COP, LOOK, LISTEN

ISSUE 1 | Tuesday 8 November

Hi,

Welcome to the first edition of **COP, LOOK, LISTEN** in 2022, a bulletin covering information attacks and anti-climate trends in and around COP27. This is Part 1 of a bumper volume to mark the opening of the summit and provide a 'state of play' on climate mis-disinformation as negotiations begin in Egypt - Part 2 tomorrow!

In this issue, we look at key shifts in the geopolitical landscape since [COP26](#) and their effect on climate mis- and disinformation. This includes Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine, widespread cost of living crises and increased lobbying from petrochemical states around oil and gas.

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.

**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](mailto: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](#).

## **\*SECURITY ALERT: COP27 OFFICIAL APP\***

The Egyptian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has released an official app for attendees, which is being widely promoted on incoming flights, around Sharm el Sheikh and via QR codes at the venue. As reported in [The Guardian](#) on Sunday, **there is credible reason to believe the app compromises a device at the highest level.** Having spoken to those involved, this appears to include 'hot mic-ing' a user's phone (essentially co-opting the microphone, camera and GPS system for surveillance), as well as permissions for screen recording, attempts to access stored mailboxes and 'root access'. For Android devices, the latter is equivalent to 'jailbreaking' an iPhone.

Based on this assessment, **it is recommended that people treat the app with extreme caution.** If already downloaded, the associated device may be compromised and pose a risk to anyone communicating to or with it. As yet, it is unclear whether deleting the app and/or actioning a Factory Reset will resolve the issue. There is a suggestion over 5,000 people have already downloaded the app, which should concern us all.

## Disinfo



Among the most significant developments since COP26 has been Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, which continues to send shockwaves through global supply chains, diplomatic circles and financial systems. The resultant crisis around fossil fuel prices, alongside cost of living increases and economic downturn post-Covid, have provided fertile ground for mis-/disinformation on climate. In the lead-up to COP27, for example, **Putin's climate advisor penned an op-ed that ran in the Washington Times calling for renewed "climate cooperation"** between Russia and the US (but **making no mention** for *why* relations have soured).



**Russian Embassy, UK** ✓

@RussianEmbassy

🇷🇺 Russia government organization

...

⚠️ **@mod\_russia**: According to available information, representatives of this **#RoyalNavy** unit were involved in plotting, organising and implementation of the **#terrorist** attack in the **#BalticSea** on 26 September 2022 to blow up **#NordStream1** and **#NordStream2** gas pipelines.

**Russian MoD:**



**Royal Navy** was involved in plotting,

organising and implementation of the **terrorist attack** in the Baltic Sea on **26 September 2022** to blow up the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 gas pipelines.

Concerning content is also coming from mainstream (often right-wing) news sources. In **March 2022**, as public understanding of the conflict and its ramifications were being shaped, the Murdoch-owned *Wall Street Journal* **ran more climate disinformation** than it had for any single month in the last 20 years, seeming to echo the fossil fuel industry's stance on **disaster capitalism**.

In the US political sphere, former VP Mike Pence has **falsely claimed** that Biden's decision to cancel the Keystone XL Pipeline made the US more dependent on Russian oil. In addition, one prominent attack claimed that Putin is funding environmental groups to oppose fracking - a Washington Post fact-check described this as "bogus," in part because money at the center of the allegations was confirmed as *not* linked to Russia in the Panama Papers leaks. This claim has also traveled in the UK's disinfo circuit, and been subsequently fact checked.

**A selection of the dashboard's top 100 most-shared posts referencing Russia show diversity of content, including:**

- Russian government organizations
- Fossil fuel public relations professionals (with questionable "western civilization" beliefs)
- Conservative "comedians" and a self-described "nonpartisan investigative journalist" tweeting out a Trump statement
- Websites and accounts who regularly spread misinformation on a range of topics (see here and here for further detail)

More detail looking specifically at pro-Kremlin networks online to follow tomorrow!

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## COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Based on keywords frequently used in connection with such discussions on social media, the dashboard is collecting posts that refer to net zero and impacts on areas like energy security, electricity bills, economic stability, job security or inflation. This narrative remains a constant feature of climate denial outlets, alongside key pundits across social media, and surfaced clear examples of misinformation in recent weeks.

WRITERS

VIDEOS

BOOKS

LONG-READS

**spiked**

SHOP

# The myth of a climate crisis

Roger Pielke Jr on the dangers of eco-alarmism.

Within a dataset of 8,300 original posts from over 6,600 accounts between 19 Oct and 1 Nov, one of the top links was an article in the [Koch-funded](#) blog Spiked, **falsely alleging that the UK's Net Zero target will result in energy blackouts.** [NetZero Watch](#), among the most prominent hubs for climate disinfo in the UK and beyond, weaponised this narrative in an attempt to turn the public against climate policies, **using the economic crisis to promote fracking.**

Other reactions include a [Facebook post from CFACT](#), the [US-based climate denial group](#) whose employee Marc Morano [will be attending COP27 in Sharm](#), and [Texas Republican Rep. Chip Roy](#), who argued that the UK ban showed "*Conservatives*" *once again cave to the left's climate hysteria*" and that "*maintaining the UK fracking ban is bad for Britons and Western energy security.*" Notably, Roy has [two energy companies among his top 5 campaign contributors.](#)

**(Side Note:** After being [falsely blamed for gas prices](#), [US President Joe Biden](#) pointed out that "Exxon made more money than God this year." While obviously a joke, the Vatican Bank's [2021 revenue](#) was \$19 million, while Exxon reported [a \\$18.7 Billion revenue](#) in Q3 of 2022, beating the record of [\\$17.6 Billion in Q2 of 2022, when it made](#) "\$2,245.62 every second of

every day of the 92-day long quarter.")

## US Midterms: Climate, 'Stop the Steal' and Everything in Between



**Climate change denial and 'discourses of delay' have penetrated election misinformation communities on Facebook, Twitter and Telegram.** On all platforms, accounts that posted election-related conspiracies (e.g. around voter fraud, or the results of the 2020 Presidential race) also shared climate conspiracies (e.g. around ['climate lockdowns'](#)). Many viral tweets denying climate change continue to conflate this discourse with rejection of other issues such as Covid-19, gender rights, the Ukraine conflict, as well as citing other extreme conspiracies such as the Great Reset.

**There was a small peak in activity for the 'necessity of fossil fuels' narrative around 29 Oct – 1 Nov, seemingly in response to President Biden's announcement of windfall taxes for the oil and gas sector. Among top posts within our dataset, Senator John Kennedy was pushing misinformation that the US will run out of diesel due to Biden policies, which gained ~4k retweets and 12k likes.**



**Lisa Boothe**    
@LisaMarieBoothe



Democrats can't solve real issues, so they make issues up, like their climate hoax.

9:50 PM · Oct 5, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

**1,396** Retweets   **130** Quote Tweets   **9,941** Likes



**Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene**    
@RepMTG



Germany is using coal power again and abandoning climate scam energy while promising to end coal by 2030.

Just like China is burning more coal than ever while promising to be carbon net zero by 2050.

Face it, fossil fuels like coal actually keep the lights on and houses warm.

7:40 PM · Oct 11, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

**4,109** Retweets   **298** Quote Tweets   **16.8K** Likes



**Greg Price** ✓  
@greg\_price11



- If you have a cock and balls, you are a man
- The vaccine doesn't work
- The election was stolen
- Climate change is a hoax
- Covid probably came from a lab
- Children's hospitals are doing sex changes on kids
- Ellen Page is a boring lesbian



2:10 AM · Oct 28, 2022 · Twitter Web App

**2,859** Retweets   **162** Quote Tweets   **14.8K** Likes



**JP Sears**  
@AwakenWithJP



**Censorship test: There was election fraud, men can't have babies, there is no climate emergency, covid vax has dangerous side effects, and we didn't land on the moon.**

3:31 PM · Oct 28, 2022 · Twitter Web App

**7,617** Retweets   **403** Quote Tweets   **46K** Likes

The highest-engagement content (i.e. likes and shares) was found on Twitter, where Republican figures and followers tended to describe climate change, green energy and the “green agenda” as a failure, hoax, scam or ‘money grab’ from Democrats. Many influential tweets denying climate change belonged to verified accounts.



At the beginning of October, a viral post by Fox News presenter Lisa Boothe [claimed](#) that Democrats invent issues like the “climate hoax” (+9.9K Likes, +1.4k RT); on 11 October, Republican Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (16,8K Likes 4k RT), claimed that Germany and China were abandoning [“climate scam energy”](#) and using coal instead to fulfill their energy needs.

**Data also revealed that Elon Musk’s acquisition of Twitter is emboldening right-wing contrarians to “test” him** (i.e. the platform’s content moderation policy), making statements that contain various types of misinformation including around climate. These posts most often drew on culture wars and energy narratives, and dozens had similar (if not identical) formats across Twitter as well as Facebook.

Republican media strategist [Greg Price](#) appears to have started the trend on October 27 (around 15k Likes and 3k RT), although copy-cat content had tapered off a few days later.

One of the most important “test” posts was made on 28 October by pundit [Charlie Kirk](#), gaining 36K likes and more than 8.6k RT with reference to Covid-19 denial, anti-vaxx sentiment, racial politics, transphobia and anti-abortion rhetoric. Another post from [JP Spears](#) (46k Likes, 7.6k RT) further demonstrates how **right-wing “comedians” package misinformation as humor**.

Posts on Telegram that shared both election and climate change disinformation cited links from **Gateway Pundit**, which is known for posting [false allegations](#) and has been a [nuisance](#) for Facebook. The right-wing site also [helped spread disinformation](#) claiming that widespread blackouts across Texas in 2021 were caused by wind turbines.

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## Oil and Gas Advertising: ‘Follow the Money’



CAAD is monitoring the Facebook ad landscape in partnership with the University of Exeter. Combining lists of known actors with misleading climate ads, data suggests that **43 accounts posted 1,482 ads in October, spending approximately \$1,137,295**. There was a dramatic drop-off [ahead of a restriction on political ads](#) that precedes the US Midterms, which we expect to pick back up after the election.

Energy Citizens  
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ID: 6001128129931601

AMERICAN GAS & OIL  
IS AT STAKE  
TELL PRESIDENT BIDEN  
TO OPEN UP ACCESS

SEND A LETTER NOW!

Paid for by Energy Citizens

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Energy Citizens  
American Petroleum Institute

Learn more

The largest spender by some distance was a pro-methane gas campaign from **Energy Citizens**, a [front group](#) of the **American Petroleum Institute** (API also ran its own ads, but considerably fewer.) Energy Citizens spent at least \$8,63,850 on Meta ads in the month preceding COP27, netting an **estimated 53 million impressions with as many as 850 ads running a day, primarily targeting those over 55**. (This is roughly consistent with API's ad behavior described on page 99 of the [Deny, Deceive, Delay](#) report.)

Energy Citizen/API's ad content presented fossil fuels as "critical for strengthening

national security," featuring the American flag and catchphrases like "American Oil First" - a thinly-veiled dog whistle to former President Trump's anti-immigrant "America First" policy. This isolationist rhetoric is part of the fossil fuel industry's campaign to exploit the Russian war on Ukraine, as [documented by InfluenceMap](#).



A [new report](#) from the Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH) reveals that **nearly half of the \$23.7m spent by major oil and gas companies on Google advertising has targeted search terms on environmental sustainability**, including "eco-friendly companies" and "net-zero". The ads redirect searchers to content greenwashing their role in the climate crisis. This research comes in spite of the [search engine's pledge](#) that it would stop taking money for ads countering the scientific consensus on climate change, which it has since touted widely.

The report studies the money five companies - ExxonMobil, BP, Chevron, Shell, and Saudi Aramco - have invested in Google Search ads over the last two years, finding that such content was likely **viewed more than 58 million times**. Key takeaways:

- Google accepted \$10.9m for greenwashing ads from Big Oil in last two years
- The company has broken its COP26 promise by accepting \$421,000 worth of climate denial ads from the Competitive Enterprise Institute
- Big Oil ads identified target terms like "eco friendly" and misrepresent their private

stances on climate change.

For further details on the report and its findings, you can contact Caalum Hood ([callum@counterhate.com](mailto:callum@counterhate.com)) or Sarah Eagan ([sarah@counterhate.com](mailto:sarah@counterhate.com)).

## 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](mailto:contact@caad.info), who will do their best to assist with any requests.



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