

# COP, LOOK, LISTEN

ISSUE 7 | Thursday 17 November

Hi,

Welcome to the seventh 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](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](#).



## HEADLINES

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**Headlines** An overview of key opposition content surfaced from 4Chan, Facebook, Instagram, Reddit, Telegram, Twitter, YouTube and/or mainstream media – includes active disinformation, malign influence campaigns and broader adversarial messaging around climate, which may require an immediate response from the sector.

A new CAAD survey looking at climate perceptions in Australia, Brazil, Germany, India, the UK and US shows the sobering impacts of misinformation - sign our [Open Letter](#) calling on policymakers and tech platforms to do something about it!



## UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

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**Under the Microscope** A deeper look at anti-climate actors or phenomena impacting the public debate, who reveal something important about the disinformation playbook.

Former journalist John Stossel's videos, including one about Electric Vehicles, are among the best-performing in our dashboard and achieving millions of views on social media. They're also full of fossil-fueled disinformation.



## ON OUR RADAR

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**On Our Radar** Emerging trends that have not yet reached a critical mass, but may prove a bellwether for anti-climate campaigns and messaging.

We have seen what disinformation looks like in the digital Anglosphere. What about German? Spanish? Portuguese? Spoiler alert: much of the same.



## HEADLINES

CAAD survey reveals the impact of climate disinfo

## on public perception

### OUR VERDICT:

Sign CAAD's [Open Letter](#) calling for urgent action by the UNFCCC, COP delegations and Big Tech companies to tackle climate mis- and disinformation. Prominent signatories include:

- Christiana Figueres (former Executive Secretary of UNFCCC);
- Laurence Tubiana (key architect of the Paris Agreement);
- Bill Hare (CEO of Climate Analytics and Nobel Prize-winning IPCC scientist);
- Manuel Pulgar-Vidal (WWF Global Lead on Climate & Energy, COP20 President and Former Minister of Environment for Peru)
- Brands including Patagonia, SKY, SSE, Ben & Jerry's and Virgin Media O2
- Big agencies including Havas Media, IPG Mediabrands, Omnicom Media Group UK, Dentsu, Accenture Song
- NGOs such as WWF International, Friends of the Earth, Avaaz and Global Witness

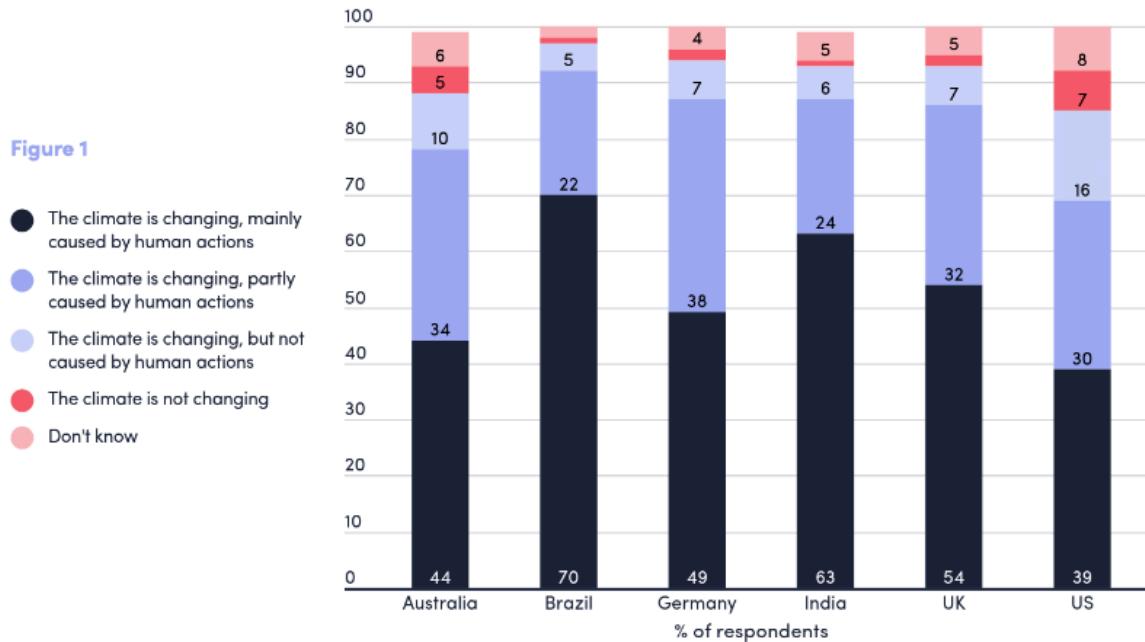
The '[Deny, Deceive, Delay](#)' report provides more detail on our 7 policy asks that, combined, should help combat this issue at a systemic level and across all parts of the ecosystem (social media, traditional media, advertising etc.). CAAD's Ground Team in Sharm continue to push for language in the Negotiated Outcome of COP27, although the text itself is looking extremely hazy at present - **if you know any delegations who may want to champion this agenda and/or propose text within negotiations, please contact Devin Bahceci ([devin.bahceci@gsccnetwork.org](mailto:devin.bahceci@gsccnetwork.org)) and Jennie King ([jk@isdglobal.org](mailto:jk@isdglobal.org)).**

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In October 2022, CAAD commissioned [a unique survey](#) to understand how common false beliefs about climate are in different regions of the globe, as well as their relation to media consumption. [Various studies](#) conducted by the coalition have addressed the types of narratives in play, but this is the first to quantify their global impact. The results are sobering and show the magnitude of the problem in 6 key geographies - Australia, Brazil, Germany, India, the UK and US.

## Sample of key findings:

- Polling demonstrates a significant gap between public perception and climate science, including on issues as basic as whether climate change exists or is mainly caused by humans.



- Across regions, participants who consumed news regularly were more likely to believe at least one of a range of misinformation statements about climate.
- Overall, **6-23% of polled respondents do not believe in climate change or are uncertain whether it is happening, while a further 22-38% believe that humans are only partly responsible.** 20% or more of people surveyed believe that 'the climate has always changed, global warming is a natural phenomenon and is not a direct result of human activity.' Populations in the US and Australia were most likely to hold this belief (33% in each country respectively).

**I**New survey reveals the dangerous effect of climate misinformation on public perception

57% of Indians, 40% of Brazilians, 39% of US, 34% of Australians, 25% of Germans, and 14% of the UK **citizens believe that gas is a climate-friendly energy source**, a massive example of climate disinformation.

- **Large numbers of respondents think fossil gas is a climate-friendly energy source**, contrary to scientific evidence about its damaging impacts and incompatibility with achieving Net Zero: 34% of Australians, 40% of Brazilians, 25% of Germans, 57 % of Indians and 39 % of US citizens polled believed this disinformation, compared to 14% of the UK population.
- In the United States, **Fox News consumers were consistently the most misinformed on climate issues**. **58% of those who watched the channel at least 5 times a week held false beliefs**, by far the worst score of any outlet in the US sample. 59% of regular viewers also thought that a significant number of scientists disagree about the causes of climate change, compared to 35% of wider US respondents. (The consensus among scientists is nearly unanimous, making it a key target for disinformation).
- **In the UK, belief in the top misinformation narratives was consistently highest among regular consumers of the Daily Mail**. While only 29% of Britons polled believe that scientists disagree on the cause of climate change, nearly half (48%) of regular Daily Mail consumers do.

Interestingly, the survey found that for most countries regular consumption of certain news outlets correlated most highly with belief in disinformation. This does not negate the urgency of combatting climate falsehoods in the digital sphere, not least since many channels and outlets excerpt their content for circulation across Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and other platforms. In addition, the proportion of average citizens using one or more social media platforms means the potential for penetration and influence of disinformation remains high.



# UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

## Disinformation delivers return on investment for fossil fuel backers

### OUR VERDICT:

#### Follow the money!

Professional consultants are exploiting social media to spread disinformation, often paid for by fossil fuel interests and/or front groups designed specifically to conceal funding and the related conflicts of interest. The problem is two-fold: 1) there is currently no mechanism to compel the disclosure of funding sources that may bias content; and 2) social media companies continue to allow bad faith actors, including verified accounts, to wilfully mislead the public via their products and services.

The battle to get dark money out of politics, as well as enact transparency laws that would compel financial disclosure, will be long and slow. In the interim, we must push Big Tech to enforce actor-based policies that address the 'repeat offenders' and 'force multipliers' of disinformation, whether climate or otherwise - for further detail refer to Policy Ask 2 of '[Deny, Deceive, Delay](#)'. This is a question of *influence* and *impact* (i.e. 'freedom of reach') - at present, platforms optimised for engagement provide the largest megaphones in history for those spreading debunked claims and other outright lies, while verified climate science continually fails to break through.

During COP26, former journalist [John Stossel](#) was one of the key spreaders of climate disinformation (as profiled on page 66 of '[Deny, Deceive, Delay](#)'). His production company and non-profit received at least \$2m [from the Charles Koch Institute between 2017 and 2019](#), and more recently support from [the Koch's preferred dark money fund](#) Donors Trust - the latter provided Stossel's Center for Independent Thought with \$560,000 in [2019](#) (27% of the Centre's overall [revenue](#)) and \$322,000 in [2020](#) (19% of its [revenue](#)).

During COP27, Stossel's social media accounts have re-surfaced as a top spreader of climate disinformation, in particular video segments that platform so-called 'experts' to oppose climate action.

## EV disinfo, brought to you by Koch Inc.

**The most-shared original post on Facebook was a Stossel video discussing supposed "inconvenient facts" about electric vehicles** (his posts also claimed positions [4](#), [5](#), and [11](#) of most-shared content in the last 2 weeks).

**In just a fortnight this video racked up [803k views / 60k likes on YouTube](#), [674k views / 23k interactions on FB](#), and [909k view / 21k like on Twitter](#), where it was also the second most-shared post in the 'anti-green tech' narrative.** In addition, it is being circulated as text via the Koch-funded disinfo media system, with [Reason](#), [the Daily Caller](#) and [the Daily Signal](#) all publishing the piece as op-eds.



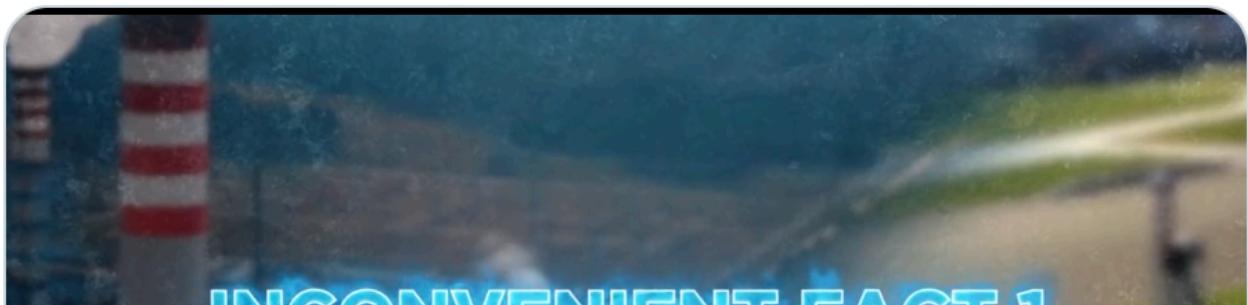
**John Stossel** @JohnStossel

...

### Inconvenient fact about electric cars #1:

If you drive it 60,000 miles... you put MORE carbon in the air than a gas powered car.

Only after 60,000 miles do you use less.





3:33 911.1K views

## Electric Cars: Inconvenient Facts, Part One

Politicians and activists who want all cars to go electric are guilty of magical thinking.

In this video, and a second one coming soon, I show you 5 inconvenient facts about electric cars.

9:48 PM · Nov 1, 2022 · Twitter Media Studio

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9,352 Retweets 669 Quote Tweets 21K Likes



STOSEL TV

More electric cars will hardly dent oil use.

## Electric Cars: Inconvenient Facts, Part One



John Stossel 737K subscribers

Subscribe

Like 60K

Dislike

Share

808K views 2 weeks ago

Politicians and activists who want all cars to go electric are guilty of magical thinking.

The first [in a series](#), the video features Mark Mills of the [Manhattan Institute](#), who **Stossel fails to disclose has received over \$1.3 million from Koch foundations since 2014** - see tax filings of [Charles Koch Foundation](#) and [Charles Koch Institute](#) for further detail. John Stossel's brother Thomas is also [a former senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute](#).

The 5-minute segment is rife with [already-debunked](#) disinformation. Mills claims that it takes mining "500,000 pounds" of minerals to produce an EV battery, a point that has been comprehensively fact-checked [by AFP](#) and [USA Today](#). He also alleges that the adoption of 500 million EVs would only "reduce world oil consumption by about 10%." The [roughly 16 million EVs on the road](#) already have [reduced oil demand by 3.5% in total](#), so 500 million would certainly lower emissions by more than an additional 6.5%.

Argonne National Laboratory [produced a model and have a whole page set up to do exactly this calculation](#). They found that "EVs generally emit far less carbon over a 12-year lifespan." Even in a coal-only grid, EVs come out better for the environment than diesel or petrol alternatives. In addition, a [report from the Union of Concerned Scientists found](#) that over their lifetime, EVs produce 50 percent less Greenhouse Gases than gas or diesel cars. No matter where in the US, an average EV is cleaner than an average gas car, and for 90% of Americans the average EV is better than even the most efficient gas alternative.

Climate advocates are not arguing that EVs alone would "end the use of oil" - nonetheless, **strawman arguments are a well-worn disinformation technique** [known as setting "impossible expectations."](#)

### Did someone order a conflict of interest?

Failure to disclose financial conflicts of interest is the norm for Stossel's content and guests. In 2017, when his company JFS Productions was revealed as [a top contractor of the Charles](#)

[Koch Institute](#), a syndicated op-ed [defended](#) the Koch family from public criticism. In 2022, a [two-part](#) video [series](#) from Stossel featured Johan Norberg ([senior fellow](#) at the Cato Institute) and Texas Tech University professor Ben Powell, who is among those involved in a [controversial](#) department that has received over \$6.5 million from the Charles Koch Foundation. Powell is also an officer of the Koch-funded [Association of Private Enterprise Education \(APEE\)](#).

In 2019, a Stossel [video](#) was [critically fact checked](#), prompting him to [unsuccessfully sue Facebook for defamation](#). The video featured a panel consisting entirely of professional climate disinformers affiliated with the [Cato Institute](#), the [CO2 Coalition](#), the [Competitive Enterprise Institute \(CEI\)](#), [The Heartland Institute](#) and the [Manhattan Institute](#).

Other recent donors to Stossel's Center for Independent Thought include:

- The [Claws Foundation](#) (which also funds Cato and CEI);
- The [JP Humphreys Foundation](#) (also funds Cato, CEI and Heartland Institute);
- The [Jewish Communal Fund](#) (also funds Cato and Manhattan Institute);
- [DonorsTrust](#) (also funds Cato, CO2 Coalition, CEI, Heartland Institute, and Manhattan Institute); and
- The [Thomas W. Smith Foundation](#) (also funds Cato, CO2 Coalition, and Manhattan Institute).

The foundations above, plus the Charles Koch Foundation, gave a combined total of \$1,494,688 to Stossel's Center from 2019-2020– 40% of the Center's revenue of \$3,783,057 in that two-year period.

Stossel tries to maintain his image as a reporter, and judging by his large audience across platforms is largely succeeding in that goal. The content itself, however, is far from adhering to journalistic standards from both a factual, ethical and financial standpoint, and should be exposed at every possible opportunity.



ON OUR RADAR

# Around the world in 80 lies

## OUR VERDICT:

The disinformation machine funded by fossil fuels may be primarily English-speaking, but the narratives and tactics documented in the US, UK and Australia are also running rife in other countries and languages.

Climate opponents in the Anglosphere have a well-defined playbook that includes: ‘quote-mining’ (spinning a real statement into disinfo by stripping it of context); echoing state-sponsored propaganda campaigns; and politically-driven accusations of elitism. According to our research these tactics are recreated, often directly, to spread mis- and disinformation in Germany, Brazil, and Hispanic online networks. As such, tackling the issue in English-speaking contexts could well have a trickle-down effect on the broader ecosystem of falsehoods, delayism and anti-climate attacks obstructing action worldwide.

### **First up, Brazil, where quote-mining and state-based propaganda have spread:**

#### Quote Mining:

- On Friday 4 November at a campaign event, Joe Biden referred to recent severe weather events and the administration’s climate efforts, sarcastically commenting “I know you all know there’s no climate problem.” US-based right-wing media site Townhall [posted a tweet about it](#), which was lost in the midterm election noise. However in Brazil, [a prominent pro-Bolsonaro](#) account retweeted it as an indication that Biden “accidentally dropped the redpill” and told the truth.
- The phrase **“I know you all know there’s no climate problem” has been mentioned 23.1K times across social media in the intervening days.** It was shared mostly by users in the United States (5.2K), followed by Japan (1.4K, mainly by [this account](#)), France (646, mainly by [this account](#)), UK (570), Canada (384) and Brazil

(348). The conversation has since dialled down with less than 10 mentions a day since 9 November.

- Content re-contextualizes the Biden clip into a larger denialist narrative, stating that **climate change is a conspiracy by elites in developed countries to maintain their global dominance and slow economic development / natural resource extraction in Brazil**. It has circulated heavily among pro-Bolsonaro social media and from Bolsonaro himself. Examples include posts from [@fabiofaria](#) (830k followers), [@BolsonaroSP](#) (2.3m followers), [@rsallesmma](#) (1.3m followers), [@Zambelli2210](#) (2.1m followers), [@ailtonbenedito](#) (272k followers), [@secomvc](#) (284k followers), [@deputadomoraes](#) (48k followers), [@gen\\_heleno](#) (1.8m followers), [@CarlosBolsonaro](#) (3.1m followers), [@carmelonetoibr](#) (371k followers), [@GeneralMourao](#) (2.5m followers) and [@joaquimleitemma](#) (27k followers).



Filipe Sabará

@filipesabara

...

**PRESTE ATENÇÃO NA CONVERSA do encontro do ditador da Venezuela, Maduro, com o Presidente da França, Macron, ontem no Egito durante a COP27 (Conferência das Partes).**

[Translate Tweet](#)



1:33 81.3K views

4:56 PM · Nov 8, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

975 Retweets 125 Quote Tweets 4,373 Likes



Isilene Boicål  
@Boicalslene

Encontro socialista COP27.  
Nem disfarçam mais.

Translated from Portuguese by Google

Socialist meeting COP27.  
They don't even hide anymore.



11:28 PM · Nov 7, 2022 · Twitter for Android

185 Retweets 22 Quote Tweets 417 Likes

#### State-sponsored propaganda:

- Bolsonaro-aligned users and influencers spread [a video](#) on Brazilian social media showing **French and Venezuelan presidents Emmanuel Macron and Nicolás Maduro engaging in a short conversation** during COP27. Coverage then spread to mainstream media, including [O Globo](#), a highly-circulated newspaper with a conservative lean, and [Folha de São Paulo](#), which is generally considered politically independent and a “newspaper of record” in Brazil. O Globo’s story implied that the

interaction is a sign of European countries' interests in Venezuelan oil due to the current energy crisis, and by extension evidence of their hypocrisy and ulterior motives on climate. Folha de São Paulo's story was more neutral and simply reported the interaction, although seemed to exaggerate how official or 'friendly' it really was - a similar framing to [Venezuelan state press](#).

- The coverage was used by [pro-Bolsonaro users and influencers](#) to bolster multiple, pre-existing disinformation narratives. This includes everything from claims that [Europeans are hypocrites](#) for talking about climate change while pursuing Venezuelan oil, to conspiracies about COP27 being part of a [globalist/leftist ploy](#) or an excuse for the Global North to [take over the South's \(and especially Brazil's\) natural resources](#).
- Fox News [carried a similar story](#) about US Climate Envoy John Kerry shaking Maduro's hand, even though a State Department spokesperson explained that Maduro has been springing these unplanned, unofficial interactions with multiple world leaders. The original source of the Macron video? Maduro's [presidential Twitter](#).

**Spanish-language conversations, like many of those in English, primarily focused on attacking climate activists and policymakers for hypocrisy and elitism.**

- Spanish-language posts prominently mentioned [Coca-Cola's sponsorship](#) of COP27, as well as [world leaders' private jet use](#). This tracks with the dominant conspiracies among denialist networks in Latin and Central America - similar to those in Brazil - that climate change is a conspiracy by elites to maintain dominance over developing countries. The **alleged 'elites' can refer in turn to US and European actors, or local "leftists" who are supposedly puppets for US/EU interests.**
- Key amplifiers range from **satirical anonymous accounts**, who systematically mock any type of climate action and trivialise the conversation with viral content (e.g. [@Agenda2030](#) - 150k followers / [@manhattan\\_2](#) - 47k followers), to **individuals that benefit from the exposure and engagement this type of content generates** (e.g. [@laderechadiario](#) - 254k followers / [@janogarcia](#) - 291k followers / [@politicaymoda](#) - 65k followers). The latter group regularly employ marketing or product placement on their social media, for example selling books that "uncover" elitist plots.

🌐 Increíble!!! Somos engañados x la élite mundial!

🌐 Los venezolanos escapando de la dictadura, muertos de la miserable vida, el control y sin alimentos!

🌐 Y él gran invitado 🙏 a la cumbre del seudo cambio climático! No al Nuevo Orden Mundial!

#ContigoCHV Julio César 😊 Carmen Hertz

Translated from Spanish by Google

🌐 Incredible!!! We are deceived by the world elite!

🌐 Venezuelans escaping from the dictatorship, dead from the miserable life, control and without food!

🌐 And he was a great guest 🙏 at the pseudo-climate change summit! No to the New World Order!

#ContigoCHV Julius Caesar 😊 Carmen Hertz



0:33 | 22.9K views

3:19 PM · Nov 8, 2022 · Twitter Web App

628 Retweets 26 Quote Tweets 579 Likes

- Mainstream penetration remains fairly limited, but some actors have access to right-

wing and conservative media outlets that may be willing to share the more ‘measured’ content in editorials or opinion pieces. **While individual posts have failed to achieve significant reach, their strength lies in volume and frequency** - many low-volume accounts keep reproducing the same content over and over again, which boosts their overall reach in a way that is difficult to grasp through higher-traction posts alone.

- **Right-wing opposition actors from Chile, Colombia, Venezuela and Argentina are targeting politicians from their respective countries present at COP27**, including [attacks](#) that extend beyond climate as an issue. Content seeks to [undermine the reputation of political actors](#) such as Gustavo Petro, Nicolás Maduro or Francia Márquez, stating that they are [unprepared to keep a levelled dialogue](#) with the international community, [mocking their speeches](#), or simply [questioning the legitimacy of their participation](#) in COP27 when there are “[more urgent” matters to address within their countries.](#)

### In Germany, the culture wars reign supreme:

- Ongoing themes include [loss and damage payments](#) and the cost of living crisis. [Influencers](#) associated with right-wing parties are singling out Annalena Baerbock in particular (Germany’s Green Party Foreign Minister), and using populist arguments to [portray climate advocates as wealthy people who will not suffer the financial consequences of their actions](#). One video by right-wing influencer Nikolas Lotz was viewed 51K times - he currently boasts 327K YouTube subscribers ([neverforgetnik](#)) and 100.2K Twitter followers ([@nikitheblogger](#)), and regularly criticises Germany’s response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.



Julian Reichelt   
@jreichelt

...

Korrupte Entwicklungsländer, die von uns Milliarden "Klima-Kompensation" verlangen, werden dadurch nicht grüner, sondern korrupter.

Translated from German by Google

Corrupt developing countries that demand billions in

"climate compensation" from us are not becoming greener as a result, but more corrupt.

8:03 AM · Nov 9, 2022 · Twitter for Android

822 Retweets 18 Quote Tweets 4,896 Likes

- An emerging theme in Germany is the symbol of the “baker” to signify traditional German culture that will not survive the current energy crisis.

Robert Habeck (Economic/Climate Minister) [suggested](#) a few weeks ago that bakeries could hold production until energy prices fall instead of closing completely - comments that were heavily criticised on both mainstream and social media. On November 7, a video clip claimed to show [chancellor Olaf Scholz mocking](#) a bakery owner at a townhall conversation, pushing a similar narrative that governing politicians cannot relate to the problems of the average German. The video, which had previously been picked up by mainstream media and the opposition, was posted by [two journalists](#) with large YouTube followings ([Achtung Reichelt!](#) - 221K subscribers / [Boris Reitschuster](#) - 359K subscribers).

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## HALL OF SHAME

Some of the worst-offending or most outrageous content we have found ‘in the wild’ - if you want to stop this nonsense from preventing climate action, start by signing [CAAD’s Open Letter for COP27](#).

Posts below tally with the **three pillars of CAAD’s proposed definition for climate mis- and disinformation**.

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1) **Undermines the existence or impacts of climate change**, the unequivocal human influence on climate change, and the need for corresponding urgent action according to the IPCC scientific consensus and in line with the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement;



PeterSweden  
@PeterSweden7

...

Let me expose what the climate scam is actually all about.

It is a wealth transfer from you - to the global elite.

2:36 PM · Nov 10, 2022 · Twitter for Android

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8,698 Retweets 303 Quote Tweets 31.6K Likes

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2) Misrepresents scientific data, including by omission or cherry-picking, in order to erode trust in climate science, climate-focused institutions, experts, and solutions.



Steve Milloy   
@JunkScience

...

January 2005 to October 2022 US surface temp...  
featuring the addition of 29% of total manmade CO2.

Spot the warming.

Climate is a hoax.

### US Surface Temperature:

October 2022 | + 0.77°F (0.43°C)

US Climate Reference Network (data updated 15th to 17th of the month)

Average Temperature Anomaly

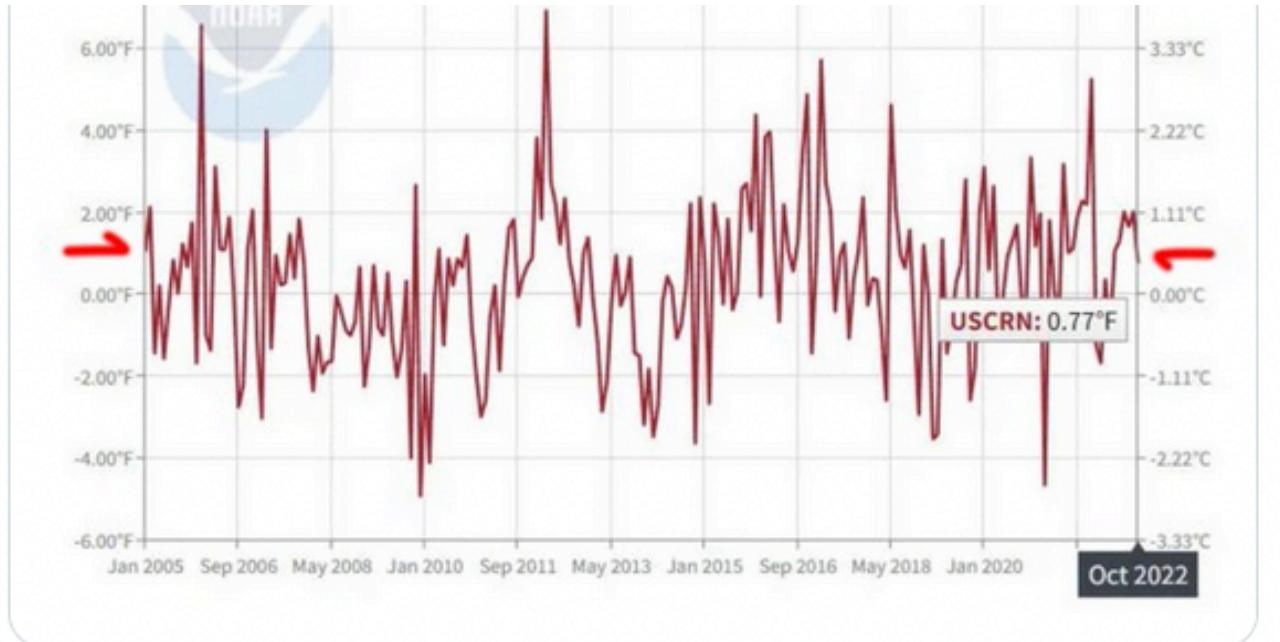


ClimDiv



USCRN





3:05 AM · Nov 16, 2022 · Twitter Web App

155 Retweets 7 Quote Tweets 324 Likes

3) **Falsely publicises efforts as supportive of climate goals** that in fact contribute to climate warming or contravene the scientific consensus on mitigation or adaptation.



...

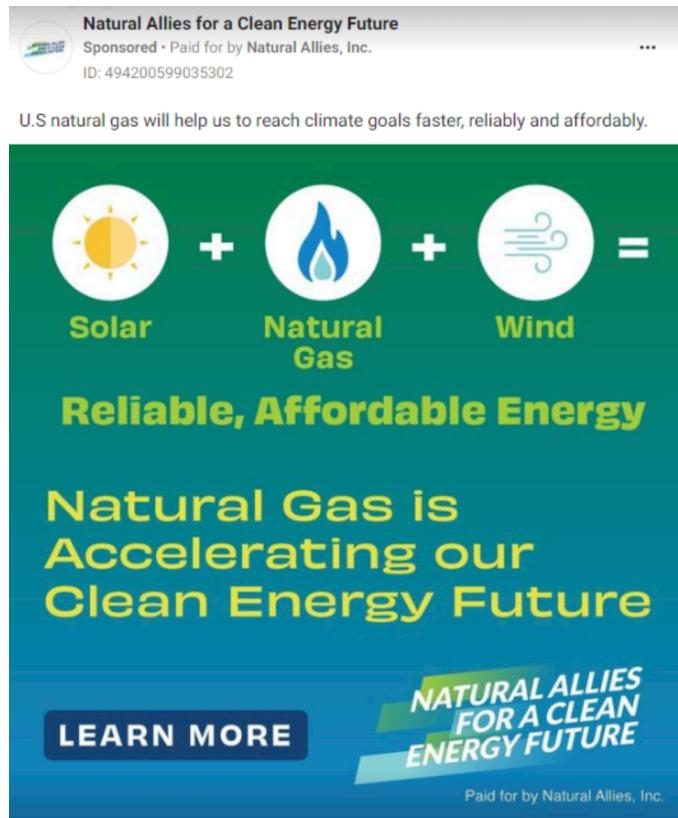
Natural gas:

Heats our homes  
Power for our factories  
Keeps the lights on  
Helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions

So what does Joe Biden do? Declare war on natural gas.

5:02 PM · Nov 15, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

215 Retweets 6 Quote Tweets 605 Likes



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



Climate Action  
Against Disinformation



ISD | Powering solutions  
to extremism  
and polarisation



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