

From research to marketing: how major corporations distort our worldview

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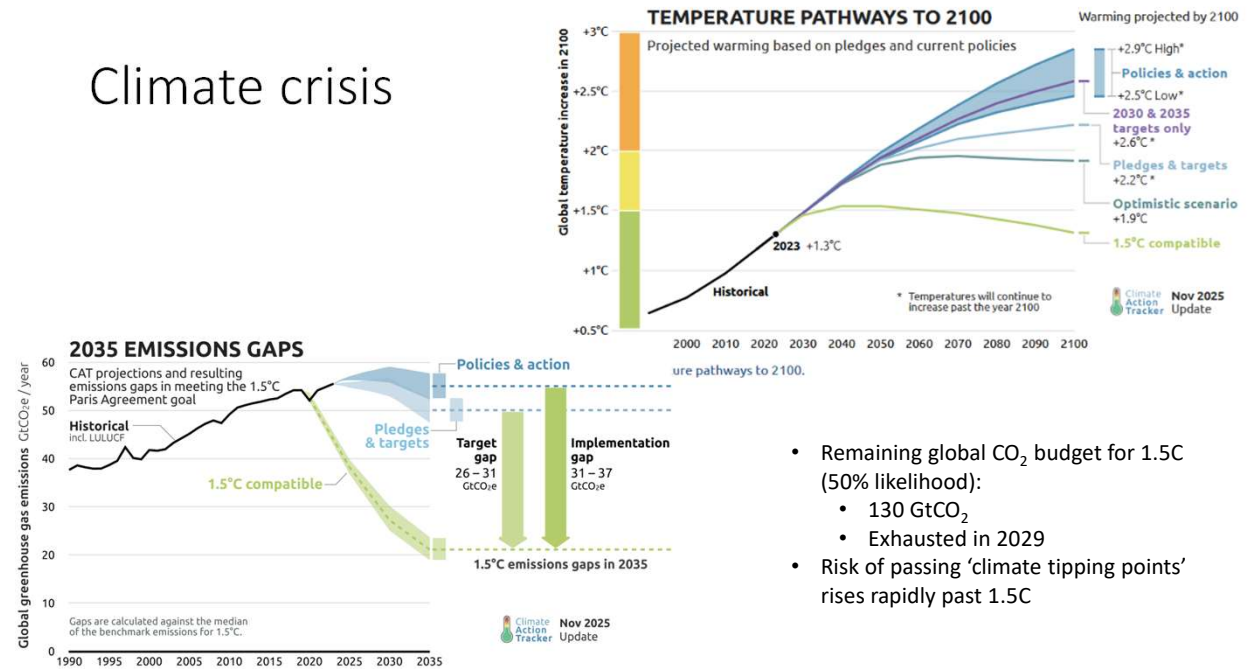


These slides will be made available at: <https://www.sgr.org.uk/>

Presentation on 14th October 2026 at SGR conference, 'Official Disinformation'
References are given in the final slide.

Key problems and solutions:
climate change/ war

Climate crisis



- Remaining global CO₂ budget for 1.5C (50% likelihood):
 - 130 GtCO₂
 - Exhausted in 2029
- Risk of passing 'climate tipping points' rises rapidly past 1.5C

- Graphs from: Climate Action Tracker (2025)
- CO₂ budget figures from: Climate Change Tracker (2026)

Climate action

Effectiveness for climate	Examples of key measures	Current real world action
Strongly positive	Sustainable use of renewable energy (esp. solar, wind); energy storage tech; electrification (esp. heat & transport); public transport; stopping methane leaks; wealth taxes; ecological tax reform; env. behaviour change; plant-rich diets; sustainable forestry; green hydrogen; climate reskilling; adaptation/ resilience measures	Rapid expansion of solar/ wind energy, battery storage, EVs (though not fast enough); forestry protection increasing in some regions; little progress in other areas
Limited/ slow/ significant side-effects	Carbon capture & storage; nuclear power; biofuels; synthetic fuels; AI	Major funding in many areas
Strongly negative	Fossil fuel exploration/ expansion/ subsidies/ deregulation; high carbon advertising/ lifestyles; SUVs; aviation subsidies; data-centre expansion; brown/ blue hydrogen; militarism; inequality	Major policy/ industry focus continues, supported by major funding streams

- The measures listed in the table are a snapshot of the situation.
- Two examples of recent in-depth analysis: Systems Change Lab (2025); UNEP (2026) – although many details are still under debate.

War

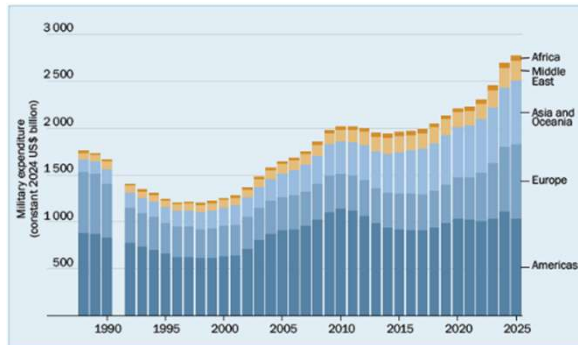


Figure 1. World military expenditure, by region, 1988–2025

SIPRI (2026)

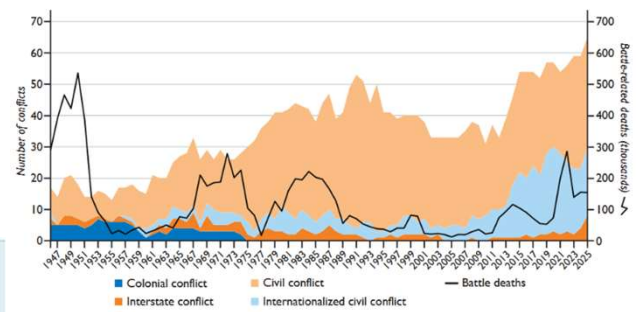


Figure 3: Number of state-based armed conflicts by conflict type, 1946–2025. Source: Lacina and Gleditsch Battle Death Datasets (2005), UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset and UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset (Pettersson, Davies & Öberg, 2026).

PRIO (2026)

Graphs from: SIPRI (2026); PRIO (2026)

Peace action

Effectiveness for peace	Examples of key measures	Current real world action
Strongly positive	Grassroots peacebuilding; arms control/ disarmament treaties; respect for international law/ legal bodies (esp. UN, ICJ, ICC); diplomacy/ negotiation/ mediation; common security agreements; low military spending; bans on WMDs/ indiscriminate weapons; defensive/ non-offensive/ neutral military postures	Increasingly marginalised
Limited/ significant side-effects	Military alliances; 'humanitarian' military intervention	Significant focus
Strongly negative	High military spending; 'welfare to warfare' spending shifts; military spending targets (incl. NATO 3.5% GDP); arms industry expansion/ subsidies/ deregulation; disruptive military technologies; arms races; threats to use/ deployment of WMDs (esp. nuclear weapons)	Strong focus of governments & industry

- The measures listed in the table are a snapshot of the situation.
- Some examples of further reading: Lebow (2010); Elworthy (2017); Mehta (2019); Rogers (2021) – again, many details are still under debate.

Corporate responses:
fossil fuel/ arms industries and
misinformation/ disinformation

Corporate misinformation & disinformation strategies

- Normalisation
 - Project message that company is trustworthy & its activities are responsible
 - Encourage public that use of problem products is desirable/ acceptable/ essential
- Silence/ misdirection
 - Ignore problem
 - Focus on different (minor) problem that's easier to solve
- False doubt or certainty/ false balance
 - Dismiss/ question robust scientific evidence
 - Claim certainty where evidence is weak
- Use of social media/ AI can strengthen these strategies

- For more discussion, see, for example: SGR (2009); Oreskes & Conway (2010); Simms & Murray (2023)

Fossil fuel & arms industry: current messaging

- Fossil fuels
 - Fossil-fuelled technologies are normal/ essential part of everyday life
 - Fossil fuels are too important to phase out
 - This will cost jobs/ damage economy
 - Net zero strategies are too expensive
 - 'Climate-friendly' tech must involve fossil fuels
 - e.g. CCS, blue hydrogen, LNG, fracking
- Arms
 - Heavily-armed militaries are normal/ essential part of everyday life
 - We need powerful militaries to defend sustainable development
 - Climate action can wait
 - Weapons systems can be precise & low carbon
 - Military spending is good for jobs and wider economy

- Many counter-arguments!

Examples of normalisation/ misdirection: high carbon/ arms sponsorship of sport

Sport	Competitions/ teams/ bodies	High carbon sponsors
Football	FIFA Men's World Cup 2026 (North America) UEFA Champions League 2025-26 Paris St Germain FC (French/ European champions 2026) Arsenal FC (English champions/ European runners-up 2026) Borussia Dortmund (European runners-up 2024)	Aramco; Qatar Airways; American Airlines; Hyundai-Kia Qatar Airways Qatar Airways Emirates Rheinmetall
Olympics	Winter Games 2026 (Italy)	Eni; Stellantis; ITA Airways; Leonardo; Finmeccanica
Snow sports	FIS US Ski Association Norwegian Ski Federation Ski Association of Japan	Audi United Airlines; Toyota Vår Energi; Audi INPEX; Japan Airlines; Subaru
Cycling	British Cycling British team in Tour de France	Shell Ineos

- Information sourced from company/ organisational websites. Also see: NWI/SGR (2025); NWI/SGR (2026a); NWI/SGR (2026b)

Biasing R&D agendas: high carbon/ arms funding of STEM organisations

- Between 2010 and 2020, six fossil fuel companies gave more than \$700m to US universities
- Royal Academy of Engineering
 - Sponsors include: BP; Babcock; BAE Systems; Boeing; Rolls-Royce; MBDA
- EngineeringUK
 - Sponsors include: Babcock; Equinor; Leonardo; Rolls-Royce; RWE; Thales
- UK Defence Universities Alliance
 - Launched in summer: 35 universities joined immediately
 - Priority for govt/ industry military tech projects
 - Funding for research on peacebuilding etc marginalised as part of huge cuts to international aid budgets

- Study on fossil fuel influence on US universities published in September 2026 – see: The Guardian (2026a)
- Sponsorship data from organisational websites. Also see: SGR (2019).
- For more on the Defence Universities Alliance, see, for example: The Canary (2026)

Challenging the misinformation & disinformation

Climate messaging

- Bans needed on fossil fuel/ high carbon advertising
- 'Green' companies should sponsor more sport
 - e.g. Forest Green Rovers/ Ecotricity
- Emphasise the benefits of sustainable society
 - Lots of green jobs; healthier, fairer society; better quality of life
- New messaging to emphasise urgency
 - 1.5C target virtually gone: every tonne of carbon pollution is now 'dangerous'
 - Can your organisation cut emissions by 90% by 2030-2035?
 - One of the fastest ways to reduce pollution is behaviour change
 - Elderly are among the most vulnerable to heatwaves etc

- For behaviour change to be effective on a large scale, govt support (e.g. through financial incentives) are needed

Peace messaging

- Support Türkiye's call for climate spending to be higher than military spending
- Accurate labelling of weapons systems
 - e.g. nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction not 'deterrent'
- Challenge NATO 3.5%/ 5% GDP spending target
 - 'Extreme'
 - 'Trump's target'
- Question UK military priorities
 - e.g. global force projection/ overseas military bases/ nuclear weapons
- Question Russian threat to NATO nations
 - e.g. due to military failures/ huge losses during Ukraine war
- Prioritise diplomacy, peace-building

- Türkiye's call: The Guardian (2026b)
- For analysis of Russia's military failures/ huge losses, see for example: CSIS (2026)

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