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[BOB DOPPELT: Climate-change deniers follow script of tobacco industry](http://www.registerguard.com/csp/cms/sites/web/opinion/25018894-47/climate-global-temperatures-warming-bob.csp)[\(http://www.registerguard.com/csp/cms/sites/web/opinion/25018894-47/climate-global-temperatures-warming-bob.csp\)](http://www.registerguard.com/csp/cms/sites/web/opinion/25018894-47/climate-global-temperatures-warming-bob.csp)

BY BOB DOPPELT*For The Register-Guard*Posted to Web: **Wednesday, Jul 28, 2010 05:32PM**Appeared in print: **Wednesday, Jul 28, 2010, page A9**

Even as the East Coast sweltered under 100-degree temperatures, the campaign to convince the public that global warming is a hoax charged forward. Polling suggests this crusade has paid off. Public acceptance of the science of global warming has dropped. But record high temperatures aren't opinion — they are physical reality. Americans must quickly see through this manipulative attempt to kill climate legislation before temperature extremes become the norm.

It was only six months ago that the East Coast was paralyzed by a deep freeze, leading some to pan the idea of global warming. A satellite image of last February's global temperature anomalies, which can be obtained from NASA's website at <http://data.giss.nasa.gov>, shows what was actually going on. While the East Coast of the U.S. and parts of Europe were extremely cold and snowbound, temperatures in the Arctic and much of the rest of the world were much warmer than normal.

The cause, according to researchers at the recent International Polar Year Oslo Science Conference in Norway, was abnormally warm temperatures in the far north. The warm air over the Arctic pushed the polar jet stream farther south, leading to freezing temperatures in the eastern U.S. and northern Europe.

This is a classic example of how a warming planet can change the climate in weird ways. The Oslo researchers said that exceptionally cold winters would in the future likely become the norm in some parts of the world. At the same time, other regions will likely experience increasingly warmer winters.

Indeed, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration recently said that the combined global land and ocean temperatures from January to May of this year were warmer than the same time period of any year since record keeping began in the 1880s.

Extreme temperatures occur naturally, and no single event can be linked to global warming. But a warming planet increases the probability of more frequent extremes.

A report published last year in Geophysical Research Letters concluded that rising temperatures are increasing the proportion of record highs and record lows in the U.S. For example, there has been an increase in the occurrence of heat waves in the U.S. since 1960.

Without major cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, the study concluded that by the 2030s the western U.S. could see seven to eight intense heat waves. Other regions of the nation will experience at least four.

As the world copes with an increasing number of temperature extremes, and as other signs of global warming such as melting Arctic ice sheets and glaciers and rising sea levels are visible for all to see, a campaign persists to blame — and intimidate — the messengers. Staunch climate deniers continue to pummel top climate scientists with claims that they manipulated and destroyed data in order to support the findings of their research.

A new book, “Merchants of Doubt,” by Naomi Oreskes and Eric Conway shines the light on the strategy behind these efforts. It documents how a small group of well-connected scientists, driven mostly by the fear that acknowledging the reality of human-induced global warming will lead to government regulation that stifles the free market and private enterprise, have collaborated with conservative groups and fossil fuel companies to manufacture doubt about the science of climate change.

Their strategy replicates the one used by the tobacco industry to cast doubt on the link between smoking and cancer — in fact, some of the same people have been involved with both campaigns. The strategy is to relentlessly challenge even well-established climate science, portray dissenters as victims of a liberal environmentalist agenda, and try to discredit the leading researchers in the field.

The operation is not the only reason, but it has played a role in stalling congressional action on climate legislation. And, although one independent review after another has exonerated the climate scientists and reaffirmed the basic science of human-induced global warming, many top researchers have received death threats and in other ways continue to be harassed.

We are better than this. America has always had a remarkable capacity for what social analyst Joel Kotkin describes as *sokojikara* — the ability to overcome obstacles, bounce back and chart an effective course. Most people ultimately rejected the cynical tactics of the tobacco industry. If we are to prevent the tragedy of a dramatic increase in extreme temperatures, we must rebuff the underhanded approach of the climate denial campaign now.

The elements of success are still within our grasp.

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