



Putin the denier

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At last liberals have a reason to hate Vladimir Putin: The president of Russia is a climate change denier who thinks the campaign to curb carbon emissions is a plot to keep Russia and countries like it from fully developing their economies. So far, however, they have been giving the Russian leader the sort of grief visited on climate change skeptics in the West.

According to a dispatch from the Reuters news agency, because Putin thinks man-made climate change isn't a real phenomenon, Russian media pays little attention to the subject, especially efforts to control it by reducing the use of carbon-based fuels. If there is one thing people in the media in Russia know, change can prove dangerous, as the Wikipedia page titled "List of Journalists Killed in Russia" suggests.

Andrey Illarionov, a former Putin economic advisor who is now at the Washington, D.C.-based libertarian think tank the Cato Institute, says the Russian leader's climate change skepticism is based on the "very extensive work" his staff did on both sides of the issue. "It became clear that the climate is a complicated system and that, so far, the evidence presented for the need to 'fight' global warming was rather unfounded," Illarionov told Reuters.

In the past, Putin has been quoted as saying that a warming global climate might be a good thing for Russians because they would have to spend less on winter coats and agricultural production would rise.

We're hardly Putin fans, so we don't put stock in his views on climate change. They are a sign, however, that the debate on the subject, rightly or wrongly, isn't settled.