

Right-wing media seize on snow at Copenhagen conference to deem climate change a "fraud"

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SUMMARY: Right-wing media have highlighted recent snowfall during the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen, often suggesting that the winter storm is evidence that climate change is, in Rush Limbaugh's words, "a fraud." But climate scientists reject the notion that short-term changes in weather, let alone individual storms, bear any relevance to the global warming debate, and several major climate data centers have said that, thus far, 2009 is one of the warmest years on record.

Right-wing media falsely suggested snow during Copenhagen conference disproves climate change

Limbaugh: "God dumps a snowstorm on 'em, all over this manmade fraud." During the [December 17](#) edition of *The Rush Limbaugh Show*, Limbaugh said: "So just when [A] Gore and all these enviro-wacko Commies and phony scientists reach the height of deceit, God dumps a snowstorm on 'em, all over this manmade fraud. ... Denmark has not had a white Christmas for 14 years. All of a sudden, God, with his sense of humor, gives us a blizzard on loan from him, right in the middle of these wackos getting together for their little conference."

Hannity claimed snow during climate change conference is God's "sense of humor." During the [December 17](#) edition of *The Sean Hannity Show*, after Accuweather.com senior forecaster Joe Bastardi cited the snow in Copenhagen, Sean Hannity replied: "God has a sense of humor, there's no doubt." Bastardi replied, "Who the heck scheduled this climate conference for December over there?" Bastardi went on to claim that a "triple crown of cooling" is occurring, and that he is just as "concerned" about a possible "ice age" as "anything else." Hannity later asked Bastardi if climate change is "a hoax, as I have been saying."

Drudge Report: "Blizzard Dumps Snow on Copenhagen as Leaders Battle Warming." From the December 18 edition of The Drudge Report:



Blizzard Dumps Snow on Copenhagen as Leaders Battle Warming...
More on the way; Temps set to drop even further...

Fox Nation: "Obama Flies to Copenhagen as Blizzard Hits." From the December 18 edition of Fox Nation:

Climate scientists: Individual storms have no relevance to global warming debate

NASA climatologist: "Weather isn't going to go away because of climate change." A March 2, 2008, *New York Times* [article](#) reported that climate scientists -- including at least one who has disputed aspects of the scientific consensus on global warming -- completely reject the notion that short-term changes in weather, let alone individual storms, bear any relevance to the global warming debate:

Many scientists also say that the cool spell in no way undermines the enormous body of evidence pointing to a warming world with disrupted weather patterns, less ice and rising seas should heat-trapping

greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels and forests continue to accumulate in the air.

"The current downturn is not very unusual," said Carl Mears, a scientist at Remote Sensing Systems, a private research group in Santa Rosa, Calif., that has been using satellite data to track global temperature and whose findings have been held out as reliable by a variety of climate experts. He pointed to similar drops in 1988, 1991-92, and 1998, but with a long-term warming trend clear nonetheless.

[...]

Michael E. Schlesinger, an atmospheric scientist at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, said that any focus on the last few months or years as evidence undermining the established theory that accumulating greenhouse gases are making the world warmer was, at best, a waste of time and, at worst, a harmful distraction.

Discerning a human influence on climate, he said, "involves finding a signal in a noisy background." He added, "The only way to do this within our noisy climate system is to average over a sufficient number of years that the noise is greatly diminished, thereby revealing the signal. This means that one cannot look at any single year and know whether what one is seeing is the signal or the noise or both the signal and the noise."

[...]

Some scientists who strongly disagree with each other on the extent of warming coming in this century, and on what to do about it, agreed that it was important not to be tempted to overinterpret short-term swings in climate, either hot or cold.

Patrick J. Michaels, a climatologist and commentator with the libertarian Cato Institute in Washington, has long chided environmentalists and the media for overstating connections between extreme weather and human-caused warming. (He is on the program at the skeptics' conference.)

But Dr. Michaels said that those now trumpeting global cooling should beware of doing the same thing, saying that the "predictable distortion" of extreme weather "goes in both directions."

Gavin A. Schmidt, a climatologist at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies in Manhattan who has spoken out about the need to reduce greenhouse gases, disagrees with Dr. Michaels on many issues, but concurred on this point.'

"When I get called by CNN to comment on a big summer storm or a drought or something, I give the same answer I give a guy who asks about a blizzard," Dr. Schmidt said. "It's all in the long-term trends. Weather isn't going to go away because of climate change. There is this desire to explain everything that we see in terms of something you think you understand, whether that's the next ice age coming or global warming."

Major climate data centers indicate that, thus far, 2009 is among the warmest years on record

NOAA: 2009 "tied with 2007 as the fifth-warmest January-through-October period on record." NOAA's National Climatic Data Center **stated** in its October **Global Analysis** that "[f]or the year to date, the global combined land and ocean surface temperature of 14.7 °C (58.4 °F) tied with 2007 as the fifth-warmest January-through-October period on record." Similarly, the Goddard Institute for Space Studies found that 2009 year-to-date global temperature ranks fifth warmest out of 130 years. The BBC also **reported** on November 24 that "[t]his year will be one of the top five warmest years globally since records began 150 years ago, according to figures compiled by the Met Office." The

BBC further reported that "[o]ther sources say it could even be the third warmest."

— B.C.O.

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