Chicago Tribune (Illinois)  
  
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                           December 17, 2007 Monday  
  
  
**In Bali, a harsh climate for global warming skeptic**  
  
BYLINE: By David Greising and Laurie Goering, Chicago Tribune  
SECTION: DOMESTIC NEWS  
LENGTH: 1382 words  
DATELINE: CHICAGO  
  
CHICAGO \_ At the United Nations-sponsored conference on global warming last week  
in Bali, Indonesia, Lord Christopher Monckton was feeling rather frozen out.  
  
Monckton was leading a guerrilla troupe of scientists, activists and others who  
remain skeptical that human activity contributes to climate change. He was  
denied a press credential, and twice the United Nations group organizing the  
Bali meeting stopped his group from holding news conferences.  
  
Monckton is British, and Bali is in Asia, but the strategic planning and funding  
for his frustrated efforts came directly from Chicago. The Heartland Institute,  
a libertarian advocacy group, dispatched Monckton and others in an effort to  
make a mark on a world that increasingly has decided to ignore them.  
  
"Their arguments have been so overwhelmingly disproven that their opinions are  
little more than interesting social artifacts, like the belief that Elvis  
Presley is still alive," said Philip Clapp, deputy managing director of the Pew  
Environment Group, one of hundreds of policy specialists at the meeting.  
  
Still, the climate change naysayers persist. Even though Al Gore won a Nobel  
Prize and his co-laureate, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has  
led thousands of top scientists in declaring that man-made greenhouse gases are  
warming the planet, the deniers seem to care little what millions of others may  
think.  
  
"It doesn't matter how many scientists will say that black is white," Monckton  
said in a telephone interview from the conference. "I will continue to say the  
emperor has no clothes until the emperor puts on his clothes. The truth is the  
truth regardless of how the rest of the world sees it."  
  
And in that, he will be solidly backed by Heartland, a Chicago-based group that  
focuses its free-market advocacy on the climate, school reform, health care and  
tax policy. In the climate fight, Heartland has joined other groups \_ including  
the American Enterprise Institute, Cato Institute, and Science and Public Policy  
Institute \_ that are skeptical of the prevailing science and wary of taxes or  
any other government efforts to address global warming.  
  
The groups are united not only in their skepticism about man's contribution to  
global warming, but also in their opposition to the taxes and other measures  
that could be imposed to reduce it.  
  
In March, Heartland will be host to a New York conference designed to  
re-energize the climate-change skeptics. Sessions will focus on the science and  
politics of climate change \_ with unabashed skepticism on the science and a  
libertarian bent on the politics.  
  
"The Heartland Institute certainly believes in free markets and sound science,  
and that we don't hide. I remain optimistic that science will be deferred to,"  
said James Taylor, senior fellow of environmental policy at Heartland and an  
organizer of the conference. "Congress will make a lot of noise, but ultimately,  
they'll realize that greenhouse gas regulation is not wise policy."  
  
More than 1,000 scientists involved in the process that led to the Bali  
conference examined more than 10,000 peer-reviewed papers. They declared that  
human activity is causing rising temperatures after a process that involved  
years of debate on dozens of topics.  
  
But, standing his ground in Bali, Monckton has confidence in three scientific  
papers he relies on to offer counterarguments. All three cite unusually high  
solar flare activity \_ miles-high flares of radiation that may affect  
temperatures on Earth \_ as a cause of global warming. He also has done his own  
research, comparing temperatures around the world, which he says also undermines  
the prevailing theory on climate change.  
  
Afte an early career in journalism, Monckton entered the political realm as a  
policy adviser to Margaret Thatcher in the early 1980s. But while the Heartland  
Web site emphasizes his work on "technical issues," the leading British  
newspapers at the time focused on his advocacy for school vouchers, public  
housing reform and tax cuts.  
  
  
Today, Monckton's newspaper articles and other writings are full of scientific  
jargon and references to academic papers. While Monckton calls himself a  
scientist and says he is self-taught in advanced mathematics, he has not earned  
a degree in science, nor has he published a scientific article in any  
peer-reviewed journal.  
  
He refers to himself as a "peer of the House of Lords." Monckton inherited a  
title, Third Viscount Monckton of Brenchley, but he is not a member of the House  
of Lords, and he earned no votes in early 2007 when the Lords filled a vacancy  
created by a member's death.  
  
He came to Heartland's attention early this year. A week after losing his bid  
for a seat in the House of Lords, he challenged Al Gore to debate him on the  
science of global warming. Gore wrote a response but declined a live debate.  
  
Whatever his scientific or political credentials, Monckton and his group seemed  
to fall short in their chief mission at Bali: attract attention and create the  
appearance of controversy over an issue the vast majority consider settled  
science.  
  
Monckton and a colleague, University of Pretoria professor Will Alexander, were  
denied credentials as journalists, representing Heartland's "Environment &  
Climate News." The periodical is uniformly skeptical about the science of  
climate change, focuses on likely negative impacts of any proposed solutions and  
questions the motives of those who believe in the theory. Rebuffed as a  
journalist at Bali, despite some significant journalistic experience early in  
his career, Monckton quickly reversed course and registered as a representative  
of a Heartland-funded non-governmental organization group, the Committee for a  
Constructive Tomorrow.  
  
Monckton and about a dozen others sponsored by Heartland were more inventive and  
persistent than most of the other skeptics' groups who descended on Bali for the  
climate meeting.  
  
They set up a booth offering back rubs to travel-weary journalists but got few  
takers. They laid out leaflets, which went mostly unread. They held up a sign  
outside the main meeting hall, but security guards shooed them away.  
  
They tried holding news conferences, but those were shut down by the UN  
organizers of the Bali meeting. Monckton's group did not properly register their  
space for a news conference, as required by the meeting organizers, a U.N.  
spokesman said.  
  
John Hay, chief of communications and media for the U.N. Climate Change  
secretariat, said Monckton and Alexander were denied journalist accreditation  
because Heartland "is an advocacy group, not press."  
  
As to the group's other efforts to gain attention \_ much of it through e-mails  
to reporters covering the meeting, Hay said, "There is nothing we can do to stop  
Heartland Institute from spamming."  
  
Monckton, for his part, said the U.N. process has gone far beyond science. "It's  
not a scientific process in the end," he said. "It is a political process."  
  
Heartland also is mindful of the political process as it sponsors Monckton and  
plans for its conference in March, probing for ways to influence public policy  
while still arguing the science of the issue.  
  
One immediate political bugaboo for them: A plan to cap emissions of greenhouse  
gases and allow for trading of carbon credits. A bill proposed by Sen. Joseph  
Lieberman, I-Conn., and Sen. John Warner, R-Va., is working its way through  
Congress. Taxes on carbon emissions and increases in fuel-mileage requirements  
on passenger cars also have been discussed.  
  
Those in the scientific community who keep tabs on Monckton, Heartland and  
others seem mystified by their persistent denial of scientific consensus.  
  
"I don't know whether it's politics or economics or religion that is driving  
these people," said Rick Anthes, president of the University Corporation for  
Atmospheric Research, a 70-college consortium that collaborates on climate  
change research. "But it sure isn't science."