Opinion: Siberia has the answers to climate change

By Judah Cohen

The earth continues to get warmer, yet it's feeling a lot colder outside. Over the past few weeks, subzero temperatures in Poland claimed 66 lives; snow arrived in Seattle well before the winter solstice, and fell heavily enough in Minneapolis to make the roof of the Metrodome collapse; and last week blizzards closed Europe's busiest airports in London and Frankfurt for days, stranding holiday travelers. The snow and record cold have invaded the Eastern United States, with more bad weather predicted.

All of this cold was met with perfect comic timing by the release of a World Meteorological Organization report showing that 2010 will probably be among the three warmest years on record, and 2001 through 2010 the warmest decade on record.

How can we reconcile this? The not-so-obvious short answer is that the overall warming of the atmosphere is actually creating cold-weather extremes. Last winter, too, was exceptionally snowy and cold across the Eastern United States and Eurasia, as were seven of the previous nine winters.

For a more detailed explanation, we must turn our attention to the snow in Siberia.

Annual cycles like El Niño/Southern Oscillation, solar variability and global ocean currents cannot account for recent winter cooling. And though it is well documented that the earth's frozen areas are in retreat, evidence of thinning Arctic sea ice does not explain why the world's major cities are having colder winters.

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