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## World wars up to climate challenge

THE pairing of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize was an inspired decision by the Norwegian selection committee.

Giving the award to former Vice President Al Gore and the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was acknowledgment of the courage to speak up, and the persevering science behind the warning over global warming. Work on behalf of the environment, human rights, democracy and the elimination of poverty have joined disarmament and peacemaking in this distinguished award category.

Gore has impressive hardware for his mantel, but the route to a Nobel Prize and an Academy Award for "An Inconvenient Truth" was a lonely journey. He challenged conventional wisdom and confronted powerful economic interests. He also raised the prospects of necessary changes in comfortable habits.

"He is probably the single individual who has done the most to create greater worldwide understanding of the measures that needed to be adopted," according to the citation that accompanied his Nobel award.

Gore's persistence and zeal were complemented by the paced pronouncements of the international climate-change panel, which was created in 1988 by the U.N. and the World Meteorological Organization.

Cycles of research on the human and natural causes of climate change led to periodic reports that gained urgency and certainty over the years. The case for global warming found to be serious in 1990 had gained enough strength by this past February to be judged unequivocal.

The contributions of local scientists — primarily from the University of Washington and the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration — to the panel's work add a measure of regional pride.

Gore the politician and advocate has attracted — and always will attract — more critics than will the scientists on the climate panel. But attempts to poke holes in "An Inconvenient Truth" have their limits.

At the same time Gore was winning kudos in Oslo, a British judge said he found nine factual flaws in Gore's documentary. Almost in the same breath, the judge affirmed the value of the case the film built about global warming and the measures needed to protect the Earth.

Global warming is real. Those sounding the alarm and amassing the evidence got their due.

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