



Reader Commentaries:

Solar Radiation Management: Dr. Strangelove's Fix for Global Warming

By Vivian Warkentin
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Ever hear of Solar Radiation Management? No, it's not ... oh wait, maybe it is, a type of sunscreen. Only you don't apply it to your skin, the Air Force applies it to the sky, for all of us.

Did you know that the U.S. Congress has been holding hearings on solar radiation management, (SRM), a geoengineering technique which intends to mitigate global warming by blocking sunlight from the earth? Geoengineering (as laid out by the Council on Foreign Relations in their "Unilateral Geoengineering" workshop May 2008) is defined as "Any of a variety of strategies, such as injecting light-reflecting particles into the stratosphere, that might be used to modify the Earth's atmosphere-ocean system in an attempt to slow or reverse global warming." Yeah, things didn't go well in Copenhagen, but not to worry, atmospheric scientists to the rescue. House testimonies of scientists Ken Caldiera, John Shepard, James Fleming, Alan Robock, and Co-director of the American Enterprise Institutes' Geoengineering Project Lee Lane can be found at: http://science.house.gov/Publications/hearings_markup_details.aspx?NewsID=2668.

The scientists testimonies lay out possible "future" geoengineering techniques including the SRM Aerosol Program. This is described as being administered by military jets, high in the atmosphere, laying down particles of sulfur dioxide which effectively haze the sky and dim the sun. Other candidates include hydrogen sulfide and soot. "A broad range of materials might be used as stratospheric scatterers," says Lee Lane. "Potential types of particles for injection include sulfur dioxide, aluminum-oxide dust, or even designer self-levitating aerosols" (CFR Unilateral Geoengineering workshop, May 2008).

Hmm. Jets? Aerosols? Particles? Hazing the sky? Dimming the sun? You know, I think I have seen this already. Many of us who regularly check out the increasingly whitened sky, have been positing for some time now that those huge expanding and lingering white trails coming from jets look and behave a lot more like designer aerosols than harmless vapor trails or "airliner" pollution, which we are condescendingly told they are. We have been ridiculed for coming to the preposterous cockamamy conclusion that someone might actually be purposely spraying something. But, lo and behold, now they are openly proposing to do just that. But to save us, of course.

In his testimony before Congress, Professor Robock lists seventeen risks that apparently he and his fellow scientists find acceptable:

- 1) SRM could produce drought in Asia and Africa, threatening the food and water supply for billions of people.
- 2) It will not halt continued ocean acidification from CO2.
- 3) It would deplete ozone.
- 4) It would increase dangerous ultraviolet radiation.
- 5) With SRM the reduction of direct solar radiation and the increase in diffuse radiation would make the sky less blue and produce much less solar power from systems using focused sunlight.
- 6) Any system to inject particles or their precursors into the stratosphere at the needed rate would have large local environmental impacts.
- 7) If discontinued there would be much more rapid warming, much more rapid than would occur without geoengineering.
- 8) If a series of volcanic eruptions produced unwanted cooling, geoengineering could not be stopped rapidly to compensate.
- 9) Geoengineering would put permanent pollution above astronomers' telescopes.
- 10) There will be unexpected consequences.
- 11) There will be human error with sophisticated technical systems.

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- 12) Geoengineering would lessen the public will to address climate change with mitigation.
- 13) Do humans have the right to control the climate of the entire planet to benefit themselves, without consideration of all other species?
- 14) Potential military use of geoengineering technology raises ethical concerns.
- 15) What if some benefit from geoengineering technology while others are harmed?
- 16) Who would control geoengineering systems?
- 17) The costs of implementing geoengineering would be less than the costs associated with the potential damages of geoengineering.

Do those trade offs sound worth it?

I'd rather take my chances with global warming. It is so nonsensical that one wonders if there is some other reason (weather modification? a military purpose? HAARP experiments?), which they are not telling us, that they want to convince us to accept jets spraying tons of aerosols and particulates into the atmosphere to cover the sun.

It is easy to come up with some vital risks that they have left out:

- 1) Manmade chemical cloud cover means that large quantities of chemical particulates will fall to earth to be breathed by humans and other living beings.
- 2) Humans need direct sunlight for physical and mental health. Remember vitamin D?
- 3) Plants need direct sunlight for photosynthesis, affecting agriculture and forests.

How dare these ghouls take unilateral command of OUR atmosphere, OUR sky, OUR nature. Shouldn't there be some environmental impact statements, some public hearings. some kind of public debate? Where is the media? Do rank-and-file citizens have any say?

Calling all humans. Please look up and bear witness to the desecration of the sky. This horrendous crime against nature must be stopped. Do all you can. At least call your Congressperson.

Vivian Warkentin is a Berkeley resident and Vice President of the Agriculture Defense Coalition, and a member of the Bonfire Coalition, founded to stop persistent jet contrails.

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