

An Appeal to Caution on “Desert Greening”

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Below is an email recently sent to a fellow who inquired about greening the deserts of the world. Perhaps there is something useful in it for others. In it, I've given precautionary discussion on cloudbusting as a form of *climate-modification*, as it might be used in the primary-core Saharasian Deserts.

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Dear Mr. M.

Thanks for your email.

I could not recommend any fast or quick application of the cloudbusting method in the big deserts of the world, which if you know about drylands, then you can appreciate how so many projects have turned out to be unhelpful in the long run. It is one matter to consider the historic applications of cloudbusting -- following the original and true methods of Reich -- for drought-abatement, or halting the spread of existing deserts, or even greening up some small minor desert region which is not so harsh or arid, as with the American Southwest. In those cases, one is restoring the weather back to its natural pattern, after only a short period of unnatural aridity. However, in doing "Big-desert-greening" with the cloudbusting method, one is engaging in the risky business of *climate modification*, about which nobody is fully aware of the long-term consequences.

Just as a small example which even classical science accepts: We know that water erosion is the biggest shaper of landscapes in drylands, because of the

lack of vegetated ground cover. It may rain in a large desert only once every ten years, but when it does, there is no vegetation to hold back the runoff, or facilitate absorbing into the ground. So any immediate increase in desert rains, unless exceptionally gentle and prolonged (so they won't merely evaporate the next day) will trigger runoff and increased erosion effects, excepting for areas where the water pools in drainage basins, as in flat-lying areas. Peoples living in such drylands also typically do not have shelter against rains, which is exceedingly rare in the driest regions. Their roofs are composed for shade from the sun, not for rain-shelter, and big rains in the drylands sometimes can last for days or even weeks, resulting in a lot of deaths from pneumonia and drowning.

Another case I know, a relief agency drilled wells at dry locations in the Sahel, using solar-powered pumps to bring the water to the surface. Tribes sent their animals to those wells, and everyone drank deep. However, every stick of vegetation was consumed by the vast armies of goats and camels who descended upon the wells, creating a stark de-vegetated "dead zone" surrounding those wells for 30 miles in all directions. Without any grazing fodder for the animals, the wells fell into disuse, and the solar panels were stolen away, and only some 20 years later did the vegetation return, after the wells were defunct. Natural wildlife declined also for this period.

Any standard textbook on the problems within drylands will give a discussion on these kinds of problems.

I also know from personal experience in several dryland regions, working with the cloudbuster, that the results are variable. For reasons unclear, maybe related to sunspots or El Niño phenomenon, one year you get less results than other years, and sometimes the results are fantastically greater than anything you ever thought was possible. And always when working near the largest deserts, there was a nagging concern about long-distance effects. In my own Israel operations of 1990-91, for example, nearly hemispherical effects were observed. Good saturating rains spread east from the working location in Israel to locations at least as far as Iran and Pakistan. Droughty regions also were erased from the Northern Hemisphere, including in North America, in the following months. While this was a good and wonderful result - especially in the Eastern Mediterranean where a severe drought and water-deficit had persisted for years - the same atmospheric reactions brought a strong snowfall across parts of Europe. This was because the Polar Jet Stream had unexpectedly moved quite far to the south.

For that one experiment, it was successful in restoring atmospheric pulsation and rains, and a good rainy pattern established thereafter, without the strong reactions initially observed. But what if we had continued with such a program over years, and had no concern for side-effects in European or South Asian weather patterns?

This has given me a great respect for the methods, as well as the dramatic limitations in our knowledge. One can build upon natural cycles where they exist, at the edges of big desert regions, but in their core region, no natural pulsation exists at all, and therein lies the danger.

This is why the issue of rains in big deserts must NOT be approached as a "humanitarian relief mission" which presumes it will be helpful. It can only be approached as an open question of natural scientific experimentation and human/natural ecological merit, where benefits versus problems and risks must be central to the discussion. This is not only for the drylands themselves, but also for other distant regions which could be influenced by climate changes within those drylands. So some test-experiments need to be done, carefully, to see just what are the long-distance connections, for any given region one might wish to benefit. When rain is stimulated in a given dryland, what are the effects upon surrounding wet regions at great distance, in all compass directions?

It is my studied belief, for example, that the large SaharAsian Desert Belt which covers from North Africa to Western China, and the SaharAsian Dry-Haze Atmosphere which is a moving, semi-permanent feature over this same desert belt, have a controlling influence upon global climate, no less than do the Polar Ice Caps, which grow and shrink every year with the passing of the seasons. Consequently, any simplistic idea to "green the worlds deserts" -- which I also shared some interest about when I was younger and less knowledgeable -- is no more desirable or responsible than to try and "warm the polar oceans and get rid of the ice caps".

"Greening the Sahara Desert", for example, may sound good on paper, but in fact the past epochs of natural rains in the Sahara were accompanied by much colder and even wetter conditions across Europe, suggesting this desert-greening was accomplished by a rather permanent southerly displacement of the Polar Jet Stream, similar to what was observed in the one year when our Israel work transpired. The Tropical rivers of Africa were also energized at those times of a green Sahara, with greater flows as

compared to today. This suggests, any greening of the Sahara Desert could produce widespread flooding in the Tropics, and also plunge Europe into a much colder and more snowy condition. An energized Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) -- which could also be produced along with an energized and more southerly-flowing Polar Front -- could increase the numbers of hurricanes and typhoons. The whole issue of how the Saharan atmosphere effects Tropical Atlantic cyclones and hurricanes is only today being studied by classical science -- the unknowns are central to this issue, as some theories claim Saharan dusts suppress hurricanes, while others argue Saharan dusts stimulate hurricanes. So what happens if Saharan dusts are suppressed by increased rains in Africa? Or if, by making such rains, the SaharAsian Dry-Haze Atmosphere is merely displaced off to some other world region?

The Little Ice Age (c.1400-1850) also comes to mind, where much of this happened by nature, in coordination with lowered sunspot numbers, including a wetter northern Sahara, and this becomes all the more realistic when one considers what is happening today, in 2010: the extended anomaly of very few sunspots, which is related to a cooler Earth climate, with a cooling Pacific La Niña, and now the Icelandic volcanoes going active, which will cool things down even more due to the increased Earth-reflectivity due to volcanic dusts. I could ask the alarming question: Could something like a fully-blown Ice Age be triggered by removal or reduction of the SaharAsian Deserts? I do not wish to sound like the environmental alarmists who argued for global effects of CO2 upon climate -- a flawed theory which has not proven correct. Hopefully I am also incorrect, but cloudbusting is a tool that could do a lot of "change" very quickly, and so our responsibility is great.

Therefore, I do not wish Reich's discovery to become a tool for increasing global weather chaos, and can only emphasize there is a great deal we do not know about long-term climate cycles. Which brings me back to the original point, that ending short-term droughts to restore existing climate is probably OK and good, even when done in semi-arid regions. But climate modification in the large, long-term deserts of the world, to "make them green" without fully understanding their nature, or how they might regulate other climates of the world, is very risky and irresponsible.

For such reasons, I became a big critic of the Algeria project of Mr. Abdellaziz, <http://www.desert-greening.com> which already a few years ago

produced results which parallel the alarming scenario I mention above, along with a few other bad surprises. While Algerian weather did appear to moisten somewhat (much remains to be documented here), specifically in 2007 the work there energized the ITCZ and massive floods appeared in Tropical Africa. There was a consequent displacement of the Saharan dry-air mass eastward out of the Morocco-Algeria region, then northward into Greece, triggering droughts and massive wildfires. That is what my preliminary analysis revealed. He is an amateur who does not know what he is doing, in my estimation, working over very long periods without a break, as if to "force" the atmosphere to do this or that, without understanding of the issue of natural life-energy pulsation. You should also be aware that the beautiful pictures of greened desert areas shown on his website are from pumped irrigation water, not from rains stimulated by cloudbusting methods.

The effects of the Algeria project on the weather and climate of the region are as yet poorly documented and have not been subjected to any kind of critical scientific review of weather data, except partly by myself. And because I observed the bad long-distance results as noted above, my advice and counsel was thereafter not welcomed.

Presumably, you were advised to speak with me to gain this precautionary viewpoint, which comes from 40 years of professional work which began in classical climate- and environmental-science in the universities, and extended into experimental study of Reich's life-energy science, and many field-work applications of the cloudbuster specifically in dryland regions.

So if you want to go "green some deserts", I will naturally find the concept of interest, and can understand the enthusiasm and desire to want to help -- certainly I am open to discussion. But cautions are strongly advised, and I would need to know who is in your group, what are your goals, and what you anticipate doing, before I could consent to sharing any details beyond the precautionary warnings.

As a preliminary, you may wish to familiarize yourself with my book *Saharasia*, which details the large, globally-connected system of world deserts.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0962185558>

There's more on this in our journal, *Pulse of the Planet*, from here:

<http://www.naturalenergyworks.net>

My Desert-Drought Map reproduced on p.82 of issue #2 is of key importance also.

This is climatological discovery not found in the usual textbooks, based upon the principles of an *excitable atmosphere filled and charged with life-energy* as introduced by Wilhelm Reich, and rooted in natural science. My seminars are also open for nearly anyone to attend.

Here's a more formal precautionary statement on the matter:

<http://www.orgonelab.org/sobuildaclb.htm>

And something more light-hearted, but serious nevertheless: Walt Disney Studios produced a short entertaining cartoon film along those lines, back in the 1940s and titled "The Sorcerer's Apprentice". It was often referenced as a caution about the dangers of playing around with atomic energy. For some years now, I offer it as a caution about cloudbusting. Here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2Rfriax4DY>

Kind regards,

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