

RESEARCH PROGRESS REPORT

* The May 1988 issue of the *Journal of Orgonomy* carried the first part of a major article by James DeMeo, on "Desert Expansion and Drought", which suggested that the large desert region of *Sahasasia* (North Africa, Middle East, Central Asia) is a source region for the development and maintenance of desert regions at a great distance. This thesis was suggested when areas of desert were mapped along with areas of seasonal drought, or "dry periods". Given that desert lands are enlarging at around 70,000 square kilometers every year, seasonal droughts are becoming more lengthy and intense. A map constructed by DeMeo, and published in the article, demonstrated the interconnected nature of all the world's desert regions. "The map gives the chilling impression of a planet being attacked by a large, growing cancer tumor. The major expression of this 'planetary cancer' is across

the same hyperarid territory I previously have identified as Saharasia, which did not exist prior to c.4000 BC. Secondary, connected desert regions also exist, similar to metastases." (See Figure 1 below.)

* An unusual aspect of droughts that affected North America within recent years has been identified by workers with the National Climate Data Center. A graph showing the monthly percent of the USA experiencing severe drought shows the following features: 1) A regular summertime increase in drought, in a cyclical manner and; 2) an additional drought feature that began in the summer of 1987. Indeed, the drought conditions of 1988 appear to have started during the summer of 1987, and peaked out in 1988. The small arrows in Figure 2 indicate the various cycles.

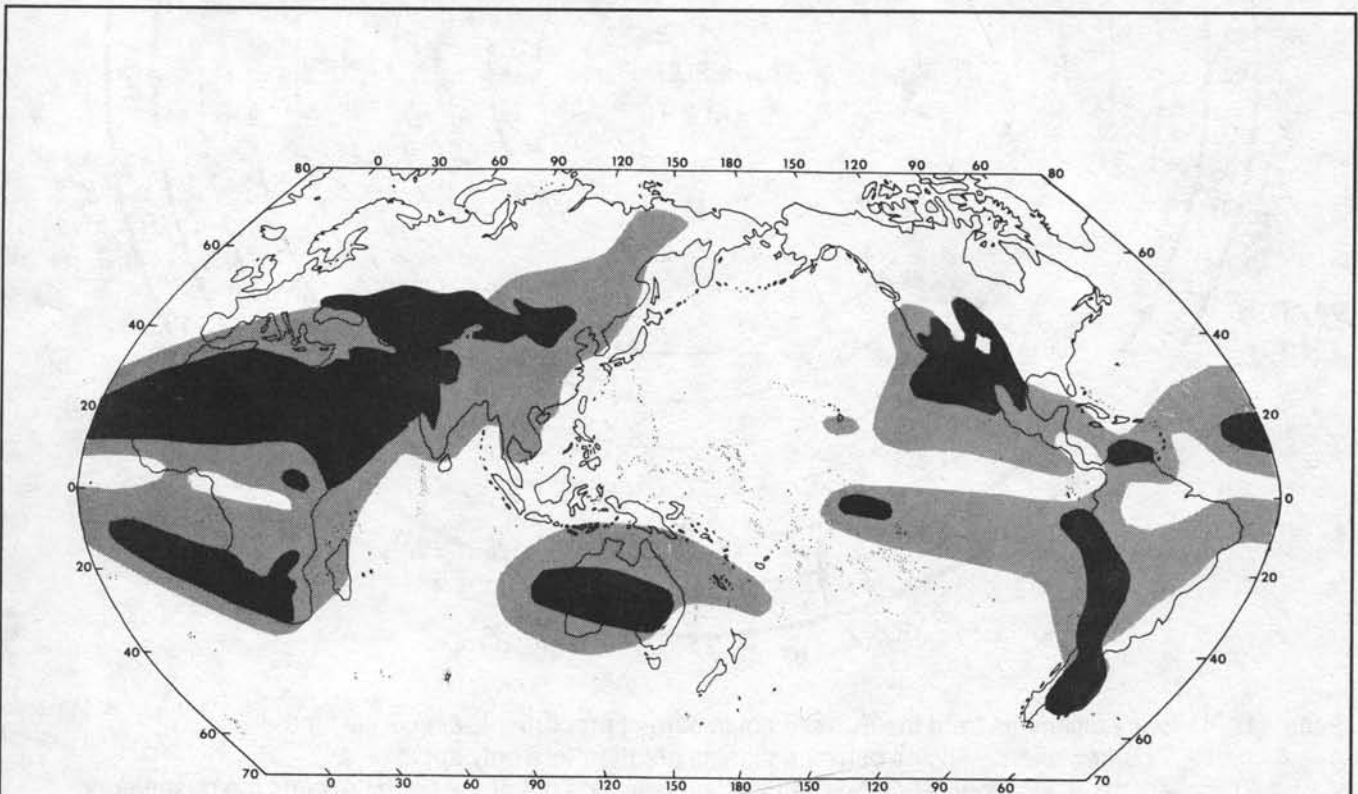


Figure 1. DESERT/DROUGHT MAP. Desert regions over land and ocean appear in black (Köppen's BW or BS climate types). Shaded or grey areas mark regions that experience a regular dry season (Köppen's Aw, Cs, Cw, and Dw climate types).

Addendum to the Desert Drought Map

This paper, originally published in 1989, addressed a number of environmental issues of the day, including the somewhat established view that deserts were expanding globally. I no longer fully accept this view, given more recent information indicating the Sahara, for one major example, is beginning to turn towards slightly wetter conditions. This appears to be associated with larger climate cycles, perhaps correlated causally with global temperature variations, which rose through the 1980s and 90s. Since 1998, a peak El Niño year, global temperatures have leveled off or even slightly declined, and a “wet Sahara” may turn out to be the factor which halted global desert expansion as recorded in prior years.

Nevertheless, the Desert Drought Map and other factors discussed in this paper retain their validity and importance. My subsequent publications in later years reflect this change of views, based upon newer evidence.

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