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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Peter Brookesmith on Tectonic Strain Theory

From: "Steven J. Powell" <sjpowell@access.digex.net>
Date: Thu, 13 Feb 1997 11:31:06 -0500
Fwd Date: Thu, 13 Feb 1997 17:53:24 -0500
Subject: Re: Peter Brookesmith on Tectonic Strain Theory

>Date: 11 Feb 97 09:34:04 EST
>From: Peregrine Mendoza <101653.2205@CompuServe.COM>
>To: Errol Bruce Knapp <updates@globalserve.net>
>Subject: Re: Peter Brookesmith on Tectonic Strain Theory

>> I think Chris was confining himself to Dr. P's work so I don't
>> see the content of this excerpt as representative of omission
>> on his part.
>I was being uncharacteristically polite, trying on a mantle [sic]
>of British understatement, so forth. Maybe not such a good idea.

Uh-oh...

>So how about:

>> From: Chris Rutkowski <rutkows@cc.UManitoba.CA>
>> Persinger's theory originally was called the Tectonic Strain Theory
>> (TST) of UFOs because he was adamant that all UFO sightings, reports
>> and experiences could be explained as related to weak seismic events
>> deep underground.

>Slightly worse than an omission, indeed, because Dr P didn't claim
>*all* UFOs could be explained thus. First straw man.

Okay.

>And then:

>> From: Chris Rutkowski <rutkows@cc.UManitoba.CA>
>> Yes, his "lag" and "lead" time was clearly stated as 6 months.
>> He would accept as correlated data a magnitude 3 seismic event
>> 6 months before a nocturnal light observation several hundred
>> miles away.

>> There's one exception, of course, and that was when he "proved"
>> that UFOs in Manitoba were correlated with weak seismic events in
>> southern Minnesota, >700 km away. In that study, he used my own
>> MANUFOCAT for the UFO data (in others, he admitted using newspaper
>> clippings!). Since I know the demographics of the MANUFOCAT data, it
>> was easy to see how silly his correlations were. And if that was
>> typical of his methodology...

>Of course this sounds dozy - because it *omits* the notion that
>tectonic pressure, EM forces or whatever may take months to build
>up *and* are related to fault lines, water courses, etc etc, which
>are both large and complex... This could sound daft too: "Louise says
>she got pregnant in Charleston, VA, last week because she fell off her
>horse in Peshawar, Kashmir, in March 1994." However, we all know
>enough sappy romantic plots to create any number of possible links
>between the two events, so it makes implicit sense - we even know the
>person telling us wants to dine out on the story, which is sure to be
>more mind-boggling than we ever imagined. But *prima facie* it sounds

>as if Louise thinks the force of gravity makes you great with child,
>especially if a horse is present - a "silly correlation".

That idea is never gonna fly...<grin>. Sure, seismic activity doesn't just happen in an instant and doesn't just happen in a 2-foot by 2-foot area. I know we're talking about large areas of periodic seismic activity over long periods of time. However, it isn't this 'activity' that directly causes UFO observations or subsequent UFO sighting reports (according to the theories). The direct cause is an energy release/creation that is _observable_.

Did the nearby seismic activity that happened two months ago cause the glowing slow-moving UFO that Harry saw just two minutes ago? No. Did it contribute to that sighting? Probably, (according to the theory). But that is a significant difference. Whatever Harry saw two minutes ago was 'caused' by some seismic activity that was most likely very nearby, (not 300 miles away in the same general seismically active area), and very likely to have just occurred.

This is putting the cart before the horse. Once it becomes fully established that at least some 'earthlights' are UFO sightings then by extension we can infer by sighting event description details that maybe (most likely) others are too. But we aren't there yet.

>And so it goes on. As for Persinger being a debunker, I beg leave >to doubt that he's doing anything more wicked than being parsimonious >- trying to find a natural explanation for anomalous events (and if >it don't work, eliminate it) before going on to "magical" ones, e.g. >"UFOs are alien spaceships". However, he should, IMO, have called his >idea an hypothesis rather than a theory. What CSICOP makes of it is >a separate issue. To omit that others have found some support >for the idea isn't quite on, either.

Well, Chris will have to defend himself from here on <grin>, and yes this should all be under the heading Hypothesis since its far from Theory.

I don't consider Persinger to be a debunker.

>None of which is to suggest I think Dr P's proposals or even his >data are foolproof. But there is more to the TST that makes sense >than grumpy Chris has let on, *and* it has the virtue of being >testable, which is more than you can say for most hypotheses in >ufology. I'm surprised some clown hasn't accused Dr P of issuing >"disinformation", although that isn't a bad description of what >Chris Rutowski has done to/with the TST. And very irritating it was >to read, too.

It does have the virtue of being testable, extremely testable. And this would directly lead to reasonable claims regarding UFO sightings.

Thanks, take care.
John.

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([[]][[]][[]][[]][[]][[]][[]][[]][[]][[]])
[   sjpowell@access.digex.net   ]
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