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Contrails On The Increase

From: Nick Balaskas <nikolaos@YorkU.CA>
Date: Sat, 10 Jul 1999 19:56:01 -0400 (Eastern Daylight Time)
Fwd Date: Tue, 13 Jul 1999 10:26:59 -0400
Subject: Contrails On The Increase

Hi everyone.

A totally clear blue sky free from contrails is becoming a rare sight (see article below). At least there is the promise of more summer-like days for us in Canada. The increased number of woven contrail patterns in the skies will continue to fascinate sky watchers but may annoy film makers/videographers (like Errol?) in Hollywood North working on projects with old themes.

Nick Balaskas

PHYSICS NEWS UPDATE
The American Institute of Physics Bulletin of Physics News
Number 438 July 9, 1999

<snip>

AIRLINER CONTRAILS, the thin line-shaped ice clouds formed from water vapor in exhaust gases, account for about 0.1% of the worldwide cloud cover, and as much as 0.5-2% over parts of Europe and the Eastern Northern Atlantic.

A group of atmospheric scientists (Patrick Minnis, NASA Langley Research Center, p.minnis@larc.nasa.gov) have made of a study of these clouds in order to forecast their possible future radiative forcing effect, that is, the amount by which contrails would enhance (through greenhouse action) the solar and earth-emitted infrared radiation retained on Earth.

The conclusion: between 1992 and 2050 contrail cloud cover will increase by a factor of 6.

During this period the contrail fraction of anthropogenic radiative forcing may increase from about 1% (1992) to 2 or 3%.

These are global estimates; regional averages (such as for the northern temperate zone) will be greater still. (Minnis et al., Geophysical Research Letters, 1 July 1999.)

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