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Mr A Rangno  
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3 July 1997

Dear Mr Rangno,

Many thanks for sending me your review on the history of cloud seeding. It is not a very happy story and reflects little credit on the meteorological profession many members of which were privately sceptical about the claims being made but did not publicly challenge them. I sometimes felt that I was a lone voice but made my views quite clear from 1950 onwards when I first made an extensive tour of the many centres of activity in the United States.

You may not have seen the enclosed two papers in which I made a critical assessment of three experiments which were judged to be the most convincing in demonstrating the positive effects of seeding but really did not stand up to critical examination.

These papers had a major influence on the Australian government's decision to cease rainmaking activities after 35 years as a leading player. I think they were also influential in bringing about a very major reduction in world-wide activity after about 1980.

The Israeli experiments were an enigma for several years. It was difficult to challenge their claims on the basis of the rather sparse data and information they gave at the time. I was however very suspicious of their claims of a continued 15% increase over several years and was led to examine some of the rainfall data independently. After much delay Gaging did send us some data but not in sufficient detail to make a proper analysis.

Because I thought it very important to discover whether there was something very different about the microphysics or dynamics of their clouds compared with apparently similar cloud types elsewhere, I suggested that the UK and Israel conduct a joint investigation of their clouds using our C130 aircraft equipped with all the above sampling devices, radar, etc. to see if we could find

cloud

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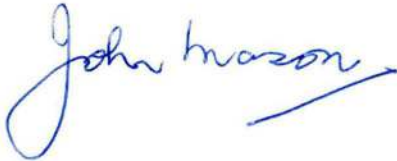
reasons for their greater sensitivity or vulnerability to seeding. Gaging et al. stalled for a long time but finally refused on the grounds of national security and also because "it would be unethical for a foreign institution to have access to their raw data and to question their interpretation of it!" As a result I came to have no more confidence in the claims for the Israeli experiments as I did for many others.

The whole rain-making story, spanning at least 35 years, involving some 75 countries, is a sad one and shows that even trained scientists, including some very famous ones, can deceive themselves by tailoring the facts to their beliefs rather than the other way round.

I should be interested to have your reactions to the enclosed papers.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Mason". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sir John Mason