Not Our Fault

The stratosphere contains a large inventory of aerosol particles. These aerosols are composed largely of sulfuric acid droplets, the precursors of which originate in the troposphere. Thus, the question has been asked whether anthropogenic emissions of sulfur-containing compounds such as sulfur dioxide have contributed substantially to the aerosol content of the stratosphere. Neely et al. report that changes in the concentration of stratospheric aerosols during the period from 2000 to 2010 were caused mostly by moderate volcanic eruptions and that the large increase in SO$_2$ emissions from China and India had no significant impact on it. They also conclude that the middle and upper stratosphere (which contains the bulk of the ozone layer) was not measurably affected by increased anthropogenic emissions of SO$_2$ from Asia during that interval. — HJS


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