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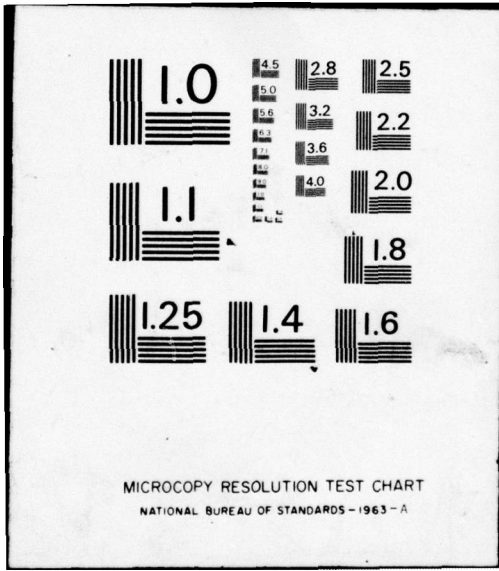
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NRL Memorandum Report 3366

A Critical Analysis of Climatological Wind Data Used in the Forecast of Radioactive Debris Cloud Movement

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September 1976

AD A031404

This research was sponsored by the Defense Nuclear Agency under subtask S99QAXHC065.
work unit 08, work unit title High Altitude Debris.



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9 REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER NRL Memorandum Report, 3366	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
6 4. TITLE (and Subtitle) A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CLIMATOLOGICAL WIND DATA USED IN THE FORECAST OF RADIOACTIVE DEBRIS CLOUD MOVEMENT.	5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Interim report on a continuing NRL problem.	
	6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER	
10 7. AUTHOR(s) Mark R./Schoeberl and S. T./Zalesak	8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)	
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS Naval Research Laboratory Washington, D.C. 20375	10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS NRL Problem H02-36 DNA Project S99QAXHC065	
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Defense Nuclear Agency Washington, D.C. 20305	11 12. REPORT DATE September 1976	13. NUMBER OF PAGES 38
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office) 12/24/P	15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) UNCLASSIFIED	
15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE		
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report) Approved for public release; distribution unlimited. 14 NRL-MR-3366		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report) 16 NRL-HQ2-36 DNA-NWED-QAXH 17 C065		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES This work was sponsored by the Defense Nuclear Agency under Subtask S99QAXHC065, work unit 08, work unit title High Altitude Debris.		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) Mesosphere Climatology Wind fields		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) → Groves' (1969, 1972) climatological wind field data is critically examined for the purpose of forecasting radioactive debris cloud motion. It is found that the data base used by Groves is too sparse to be climatologically representative. We also find that the wind field given by Groves implies the existence of heat and momentum sources not believed to be present in the upper atmosphere, and furthermore, the wind fields are unstable to eddy perturbations. These results suggest that the climatological averaging process is biased by poor spatial and temporal resolution. Eddy motions are thus averaged as part of the mean flow. → next page (Continues)		

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20. Abstract (Continued)

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→ It is concluded that for the purpose of forecasting debris cloud motion, climatological wind fields are useful for producing idealized calculations but are probably not very representative of the actual wind fields at a given time and place. A better model for such purposes would be a theoretical forecast model initialized on a regular basis from satellite radiance data. ←

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS
OF CLIMATOLOGICAL WIND DATA USED IN THE FORECAST
OF RADIOACTIVE DEBRIS CLOUD MOVEMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

It is of considerable importance to communication system performance (ELF, VLF, HF) in a nuclear environment to be able to predict debris cloud transport in the mesosphere. Zalesak and Coffey (1975) have shown that transport can profoundly alter the location of radioactive debris clouds. The subsequent beta decay within the cloud results in long lasting, widespread ionization that can severely affect the performance of communication systems. Accurate prediction of system performance depends critically on our ability to describe the movement of debris patches by mesospheric wind systems.

The purpose of this report is to assess the present method by which the spread of radioactive debris clouds in the upper atmosphere is determined and to suggest guidelines for future research. The current technique used to forecast debris cloud advection uses a Lagrangian computer code with model wind fields (Zalesak and Coffey, (1975). The wind fields are given by Groves (1969), CIRA (1972). These wind fields, being based upon many years of observational data, represent the best statistics available at the time the study was undertaken. The results produced by Zalesak and Coffey clearly hinge upon the accuracy of the wind field data. It is thus important to examine the data carefully and ask if these wind fields actually give an accurate representation of the upper atmospheric motions relevant to determining debris cloud advection. Groves' data are an "average" or climatological representation of the wind field from which some spatial and temporal fluctuations have been removed by the averaging process. If these fluctuations are quite small, then the averaged data may be used to accurately forecast the transport of trace constituents. On the other hand, if the fluctuations are large, the actual wind field may rarely

Note: Manuscript submitted August 30, 1976.

resemble the climatological wind field and resulting debris cloud forecasts based upon the latter will be reliable only in a climatological sense.

In this report the wind fields given by Groves shall be examined with the following criteria. First, we can, to some extent, quantitatively assess variability within the wind field data by examining the standard deviation of the climatological average published by Groves (CIRA, 1972).

Second, we examine the consistency of the data with theoretical models of upper atmospheric dynamics. While inconsistency between empirical models and theoretical models does not necessarily imply unreliable data, consistency allows us to use theoretical models where empirical data may be lacking or difficult to obtain. From this viewpoint we can determine if the wind structure of the upper atmosphere as computed from theoretically postulated heat and momentum sources bears any resemblance to the empirical wind structure given by Groves. Or conversely, we can compute the implied heat and momentum sources required to maintain Groves' wind model and compare with known sources. Both aspects of this problem will be discussed.

Third, the zonal wind model of Groves is tested for stability to small wave perturbations. Instability probably implies the presence of large scale eddy mixing which could greatly affect the transport of radioactive debris.

Within the body of this report the data and the observed variability of the data are discussed in Part II. The implied heat and momentum sources derived from Groves' data and the theoretically predicted heat and momentum sources are compared in Part III. Stability computations for Groves' wind model are presented in Part IV. In Part V we conclude that Groves' wind fields are probably inadequate for debris cloud advection forecast purposes and suggest that theoretical prediction models currently under development can be used to provide more reliable results.

II. UPPER ATMOSPHERIC WIND DATA

Wind observations above 30 km and below 150 km are principally obtained through rocket based techniques. At high altitudes a meteorological rocket releases an object or chaff which is tracked by radar as it falls. Lateral motion of the falling object then yields horizontal wind data and the local density of the atmosphere may be computed by observing the rate of fall. Compared with radiosonde observations used below 30 km, rocket methods are very expensive and technologically complex. As a result, the network of rocket launching stations is quite sparse and regular observations are taken only weekly. Figure 1 shows the station locations for the Meteorological Rocket Network (MRN).

The rocket data obtained through the MRN facilities contains both systematic and random deviations or "errors." Both kinds reduce the usability of the derived climatological wind models for forecasting. We may further subdivide the deviations into those due to measurements (e.g., faulty radar techniques) and those due to the phenomena (e.g., small scale eddies inadequately resolved by the MRN grid). Quiroz (1969) discusses systematic and random measurement deviations at length and his findings will not be reviewed here. Measurement error of the systematic type is assumed to be negligible, whereas random error associated with the measurements is assumed to be removed by climatological averaging.

Probably the most obvious source of systematic deviations associated with phenomena in the upper atmosphere is that produced by the presence of tidal winds. Most MRN data is taken at local noon. Thus, if regular diurnal and semidiurnal tidal wind components are present, they will be interpreted in any local climatological analysis as a component of the mean wind. Lindzen (1967) has computed the amplitude of the tidal winds up to 100 km and has found that winds

associated with the solar semidiurnal and diurnal tides may be as large as 100 ms^{-1} at 100 km in the zonal direction. Measurement of tidal winds below 60 km shows general agreement with Lindzen's computation with some disagreement evident above 60 km (Glass and Spizzichino, 1974).

Groves' wind model presented in CIRA (1972) (also Groves, 1969) has been constructed by grouping MRN and other data into monthly or bimonthly sets. The data within a set have been further subdivided into four hour time groups depending on the local time the data were taken. The average within each group was computed as well as the mean deviation. Above 60 km Southern Hemisphere data were assumed to be equal to Northern Hemisphere data. Final wind model values were computed by an iterative scheme involving the average of the mean deviations and the average of the group averages and a weighting formula. Using an average of the group averages is equivalent in some sense to a daily average. Provided large monthly changes in the amplitude and phase of the tidal components do not occur and data samples are present within each group, this method should eliminate the systematic error introduced by tides. In reality, however, many groups lack data altogether above 60 km so that model points are based upon only one or two groups (cf. CIRA, 1972). We may conclude then that high altitude winds presented by Groves probably contain considerable bias from tidal winds superimposed upon the zonal and meridional mean winds.

Essentially, the systematic deviation introduced by tidal components results from inadequate temporal resolution of the zonal mean wind components. Inadequate spatial resolution can also introduce systematic deviations. In particular, quasistationary planetary scale waves as well as tides have wind components which vary very slowly over horizontal distances on the order of 5,000 to 10,000 km. From Figure 1 it is apparent that MRN stations are principally located in the northern part of the Western Hemisphere,

and thus the network will be unable to resolve wind components associated with very long zonal scales.

A comparison of West European and North American data presented in CIRA (1972) indicates the presence of these long spatial waves. For example, in January the mean zonal wind velocity over North America is $\sim 20 \text{ ms}^{-1}$ at 50 km at 55°N , while the mean zonal wind velocity over Europe is $\sim 80 \text{ ms}^{-1}$. The difference is presumably attributable to the long wave wind components. The difference between North American and European mean zonal wind velocities below 60 km is largest during winter and is consistent with the observed strength of planetary scale waves below 30 km (van Loon, et al., 1973). Theoretical calculations of the amplitude of stationary planetary waves in the upper atmosphere indicate that these waves may have sizable amplitudes up to the mesopause and may generate zonal wind components as large as 20 ms^{-1} - 30 ms^{-1} in the mesosphere and lower thermosphere (Schoeberl, 1975).

Small scale eddies are probably also present in the upper atmosphere generated by baroclinic instability near the stratopause. If their horizontal length scales are much smaller than 1000 km, then the spatial distribution of the MRN network will be inadequate to properly resolve them. These eddies will appear as random fluctuations in the MRN data. For the purpose of predicting the location of debris clouds, these eddies may be as important as the zonal mean flow. No information is available from Groves' models on their possible structure or amplitude.

All of the phenomena discussed above contribute to the standard deviation of the MRN data as error. In Figure 2 the model values of the mean zonal wind in January and July above 60 km given by CIRA (1972) and the standard deviation of the observations from the model values are given. Two important features are apparent. First, it is clear from the large number of missing standard deviations how limited the data base actually is. Second, we note that the standard deviation is often larger than the mean value indicating that climatological state of the wind field (Groves' model) occurs as an exception rather than the rule.

III. HEAT AND MOMENTUM SOURCES IN THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE

The mean zonal circulation is driven by external heat and momentum sources. In some cases, these sources may be theoretically computed and a circulation model developed to compare with observations (Leovy, 1964; Baker and Strobel, 1975_a, 1975_b). Alternatively, a wind model derived from data can be used to calculate the implied heat and momentum sources which may then be compared to theory (Ebel, 1974). We shall consider the consistency of computed wind models and implied heat and momentum sources with their observed and theoretical counterparts in this section.

Leovy (1964) showed that the westerly stratospheric jet observed in the winter hemisphere and the easterly jet observed in the summer hemisphere arise from the meridional ozone heating gradient in the stratosphere. Mean zonal wind maximums of 80 ms^{-1} were computed by Leovy associated with mean meridional wind velocities of 0.7 ms^{-1} . The mean zonal wind velocities fluctuate in magnitude throughout the winter (Belmont, et al., 1975), but 80 ms^{-1} is in relatively good agreement with Groves' (1969) climatological value considering many of the simplifications used by Leovy. However, Groves' mean meridional velocities are an order of magnitude larger than those computed by Leovy and Baker and Strobel. Furthermore, their meridional winds blow from the summer pole to the winter pole, while Groves' meridional winds are quite variable depending upon latitude and altitude.

The discrepancy between these computations and Groves' data may be due to several factors. First, assuming Groves meridional winds are correct, the mean zonal winds (which result from Coriolis torques acting upon northward or southward moving flow) may be computed by the following equation.

$$\bar{u} = \frac{2\overline{\omega v} \sin \theta}{\beta_R} \quad (1)$$

where Ω is the earth's frequency of rotation and θ is the latitude. β_R is the Rayleigh friction coefficient; \bar{v} is the zonally averaged meridional velocity of the wind, and \bar{u} is the zonally averaged zonal velocity. β_R is unknown but has been estimated to be $\sim 10^{-6} \text{ sec}^{-1}$ (Leovy, 1964). Using 10 ms^{-1} for \bar{v} , which is the order of magnitude given by Groves (1969), gives $\bar{u} \approx 1000 \text{ ms}^{-1}$, which is inconsistent with the \bar{u} values also given. If \bar{u} and \bar{v} are assumed correct, we are forced to conclude that equation (1) does not describe the correct relationship between \bar{u} and \bar{v} , and the addition of a momentum source term, M , of unknown value to the righthand side of Equation (1) is required to form a consistent equation between \bar{u} and \bar{v} . It is also apparent that the magnitude of M must be quite large. The presence of eddies which could contribute to M are known to exist in winter but are generally absent in summer (Kriester, 1972). However, large values of \bar{v} are also indicated by Groves for the summer, so this explanation is implausible.

A more complete calculation of the required momentum and heat sources needed to maintain the Groves model winds in the mesosphere (70 - 100 km) has been carried out by Ebel (1974). The strength of the heat sources is shown in Figure 3 for solstice conditions. A comparison with the computed heat sources from Park and London (1973), Figure 4, indicates that the value of the heat sources required to maintain the Groves wind field is roughly an order of magnitude too large. Thus, in agreement with our above arguments, it is improbable that Groves' \bar{v} values are consistent with the \bar{u} values given.

Equation (1) is the zonal mean momentum equation. If, as suggested in Section II, the MRN data is biased by tidal and stationary planetary waves, then Equation (1) should be written as

$$\beta_R u_g + \frac{\partial u_g}{\partial t} + 2\Omega v_g \sin \theta = \frac{1}{a \cos \theta} \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial \lambda} \quad (2)$$

where ϕ is the geopotential and the subscript g indicates the values given by Groves (1969) which are now not assumed to be zonal means. Both tidal and long wave components can theoretically produce

meridional wind velocities as large as those reported in Groves' model (Lindzen, 1967; Schoeberl, 1975) and in all probability it is these components that are reported by Groves. The larger velocities permitted by Equation (2) arise from the presence of a zonal pressure gradient force on the righthand side and the second term on the left-hand side which is an inertial term. Both of these terms are much larger than the term $\beta_R u_g$ for planetary scale and tidal motions. The value of v_g is thus not coupled to u_g alone. For tidal and planetary scale waves, both observation and theory indicate that $u \sim v \sim 10-20 \text{ ms}^{-1}$ in the stratosphere. These values of v are more consistent with the values of v_g and suggest that the data are indeed biased by planetary wave and tidal components.

IV. STABILITY OF MEAN ZONAL FLOW

While it is nearly impossible to quantitatively estimate the magnitude of the bias that long wave components and smaller scale eddy components have introduced into Groves' wind fields, we can gain some estimate through a stability analysis. Our argument is as follows: If the mean zonal wind field is stable to wave perturbations, then any finite amplitude eddy disturbances can be assumed to arise from boundary (tropospheric) forcing. If the flow field is unstable, then finite amplitude disturbances may arise spontaneously from infinitesimal, local disturbances.

It has been shown by Charney and Drazin (1961) that only large planetary scale eddies can propagate into the upper atmosphere. Synoptic scale disturbances observed in the troposphere will remain trapped below the stratosphere. Dickinson (1973) and Simmons (1975) have shown that the long wave components are the fastest growing modes for unstable flow fields similar to those observed in the upper stratosphere and mesosphere. A computation of the stability of the observed zonal mean flow field as given by Groves (CIRA, 1972) may thus indicate where large amplitude eddy components could arise.

Using the Charney-Stern stability criteria (Charney and Stern, 1962) we compute numerically the stability of Groves' mean zonal wind field. In the stability criterion for an atmosphere bounded by rigid walls, a necessary condition for instability is that Q , defined as

$$Q \equiv 2(\Omega + \bar{\omega}) - \frac{\partial^2 \bar{\omega}}{\partial \theta^2} + 3 \tan \theta \frac{\partial \bar{\omega}}{\partial \theta} - \sin^2 \theta e^z \frac{\partial}{\partial z} \frac{e^{-z}}{S} \frac{\partial \bar{\omega}}{\partial z} \quad (3)$$

where $z = \ln(p_0/p)$, $\bar{\omega} = \bar{u}/a \cos \theta$, and p is pressure, does not change sign within the bounded region.

Figures 5 and 6 show the value of Q computed numerically for parts of the CIRA (1972) and CIRA (1965) model atmospheres, respectively. Also shown is a plot of the corresponding flow pattern. It is evident that these model atmospheres have unstable regions, particularly near the stratopause and near the pole at all levels, as indicated by the negative values of Q . A term by term examination of Equation (3) indicates that the sign change in Q is principally a result of sign changes in the last term. Instabilities developing from this flow pattern would thus be primarily baroclinic.

The assumption that Groves' wind models characterize the mean zonal flow field is, of course, introduced in this analysis. One example where such an assumption is certainly incorrect is evident in Figure 4 where a patch of negative Q appears to 50°N and 30 km in the wind model taken from North American data. No such region appears in the computations based upon European data. The source of the sign change in Q is the appearance of a region of easterly winds in the midst of a westerly jet in the North American data. The winds in this region are probably strongly biased by planetary waves as discussed in Section II and not zonal means; hence, the Charney-Stern stability criteria does not apply.

The existence of high frequency motions at the stratopause have been observed by Leovy and Akerman (1973), and these motions may be due to unstable wind configurations such as those given by the CIRA (1972, 1965) model atmospheres. In any event, the fact that Groves' models are unstable indicates that either eddy components of the wind have biased the data to such an extent that the wind profile appears unstable; or, that eddy components are present with sizable amplitudes.

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The usability of Groves' climatological wind fields for forecasting debris cloud advection has been assessed from three different viewpoints. We have briefly discussed the data and suggested possible biasing of the wind field by tidal, planetary wave, and small scale eddy motions. An examination of the standard deviation of the data indicates that the actual structure of the wind field in the upper atmosphere rarely resembles the climatological data given by Groves.

We have also examined the heat and momentum sources implied by wind fields. The values of \bar{v} given by Groves (1969) are an order of magnitude too large, and imply heat and momentum sources much larger than expected from theory. We conclude the \bar{v} values actually represent meridional velocities associated with planetary scale waves and tides.

Finally, we note that Groves' zonal wind fields are unstable, especially near the polar stratopause. The instability could imply the existence of large amplitude eddy components in the wind field for that region. We conclude that while Groves' wind fields probably represent the best available data they nevertheless inadequately represent the structure of the upper atmosphere for the purposes of forecasting the advection of debris clouds.

An alternative to the use of Groves' wind fields to forecast movement of a debris cloud is the use of a theoretical prediction model which can be initialized on a regular schedule or at the moment of debris cloud release. Such a model is presently used in the lower atmosphere and gives reliable forecasts up to three days in advance. With some adaptations, this type of model can be constructed for the upper atmosphere and can be initialized with satellite radiance data. This data, which is in the form of temperature fields, is currently available up to 60 km (Chapman, et al., 1972) and will soon be available up to 80 km and higher. Upper atmosphere forecast models are under development at NRL at present. Madala, et al., (1975) have shown that

tidal winds can be adequately simulated with a spectral forecast model, and Schoeberl (1976) has been able to determine theoretically the structure of planetary waves in the upper atmosphere using a similar method.

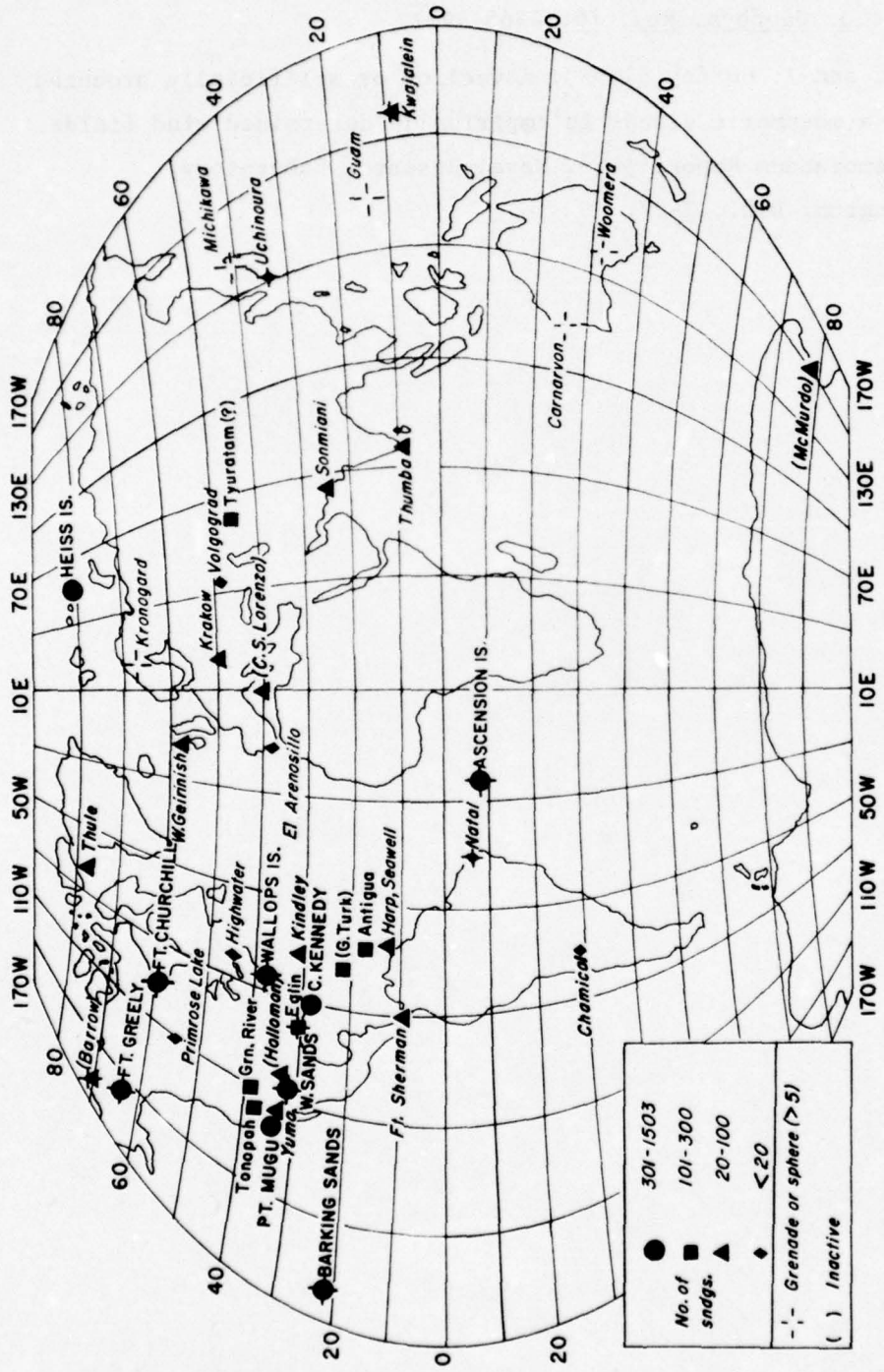
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Principal Meteorological Rocket Sites

Fig. 1 — Rocket network station locations as of 1968. Some significant modifications have occurred since then, such as the introduction of the Soviet Antarctic rocket program at Molodeynaya (68S, 46E) in 1969.

CIRA 1972

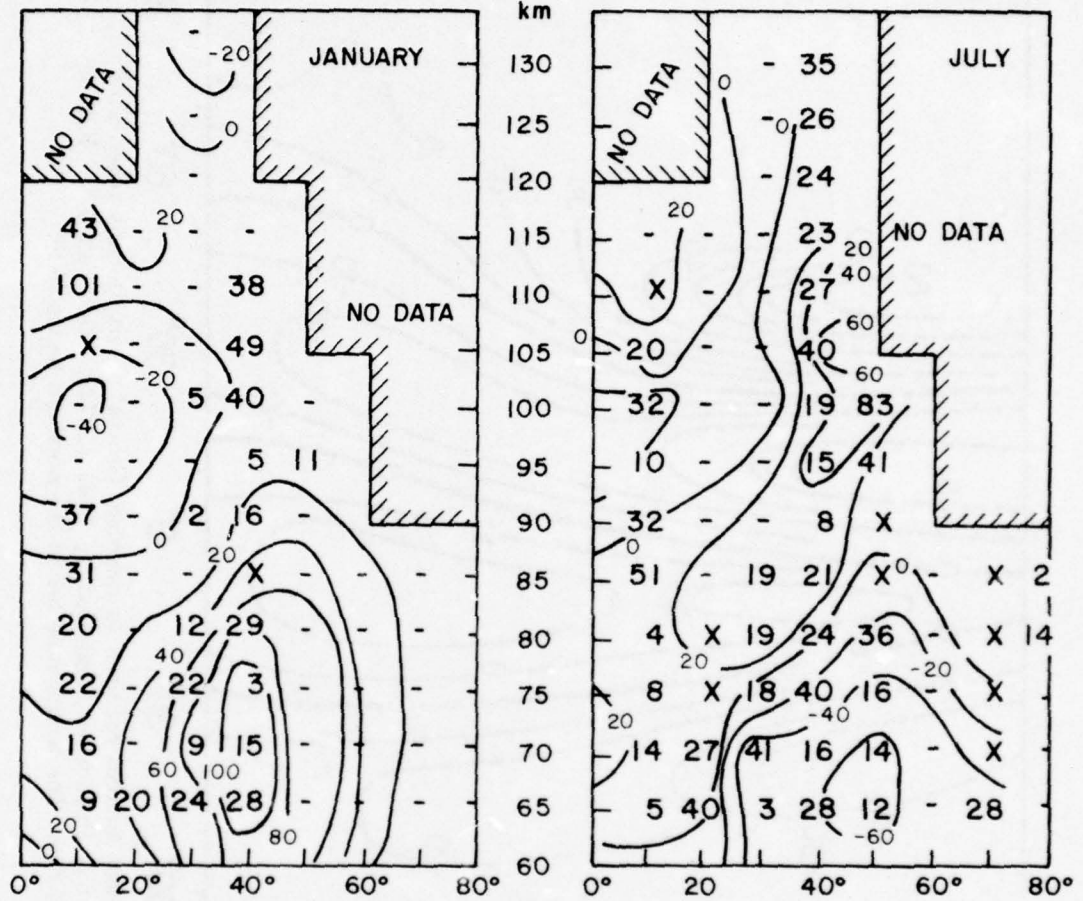


Fig. 2 — January and July statistical wind data used to construct the CIRA (1972) model atmosphere. Bold face numbers show the standard deviation in meters per second of the observational data at the indicated altitudes. X's indicate only a single measurement available; —'s indicate no measurements. Contours labeled with light numbers are model wind values in meters per second.

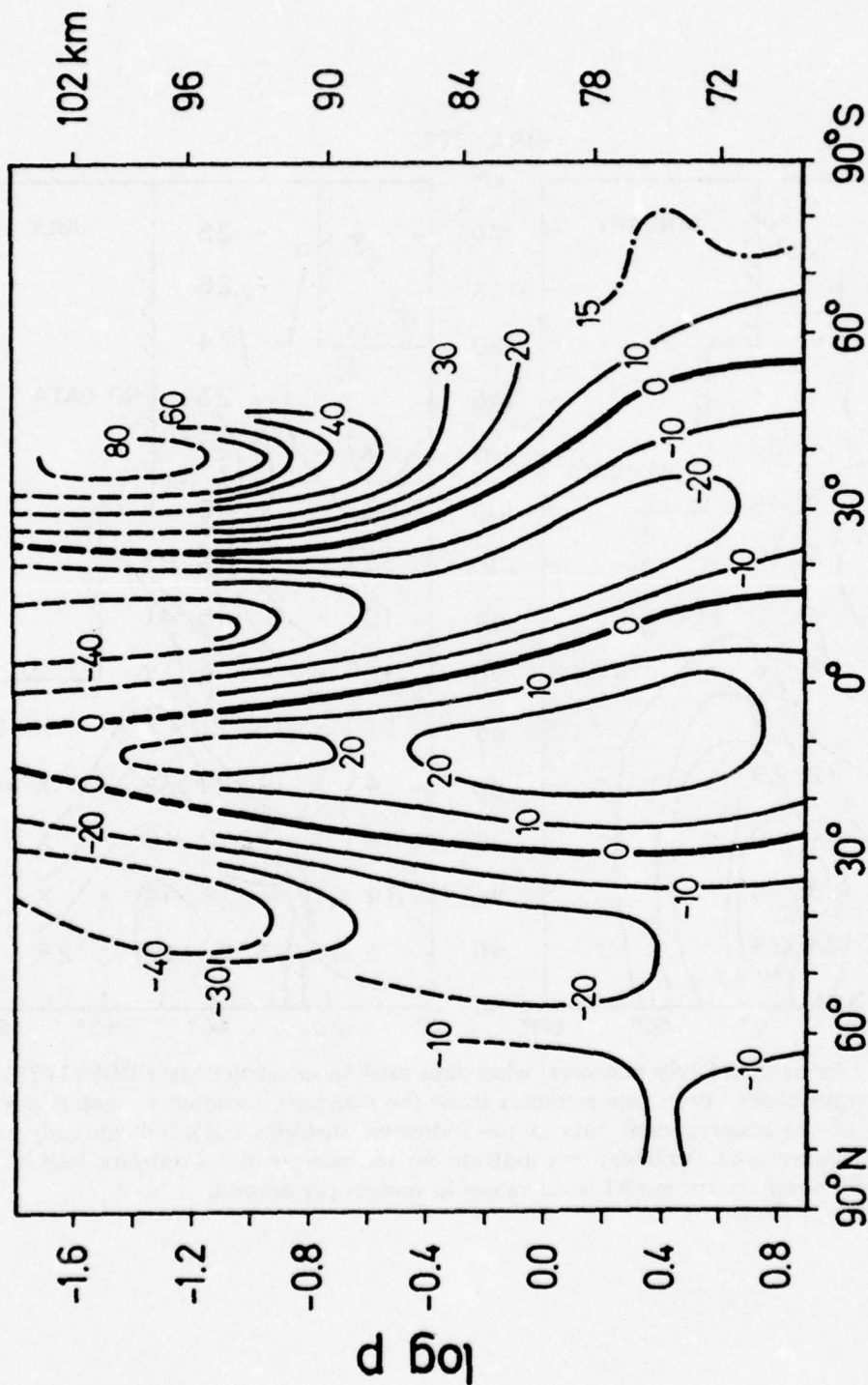


Fig. 3 — Heat sources required to maintain Groves' observationally based wind models during solstice as computed by Ebel (1974). Units are 10^{-5} K/S or 0.864K per day. The winter pole lies in the northern hemisphere.

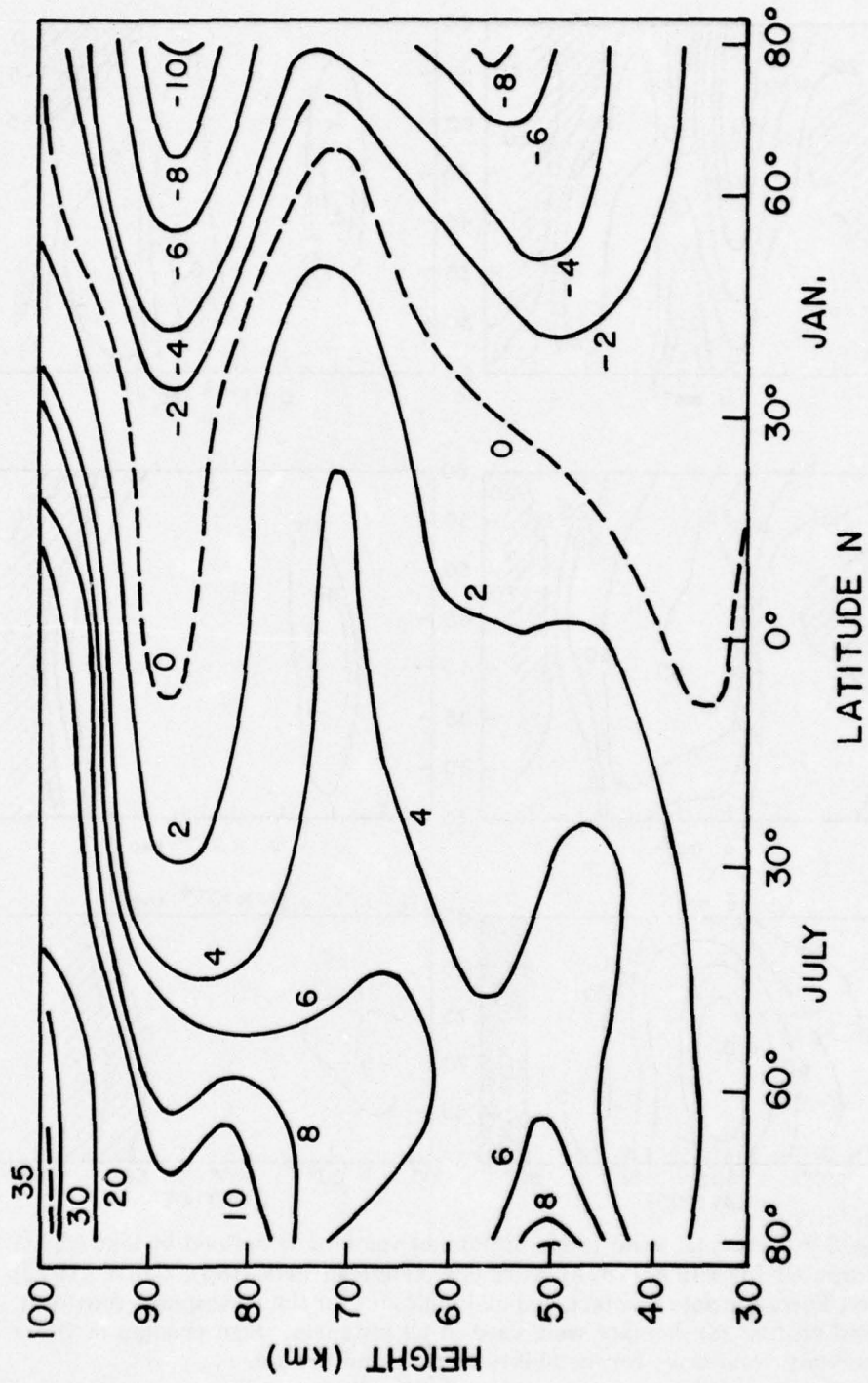


Fig. 4 — Theoretically computed heating rates for solstice conditions after Park and London (1974)

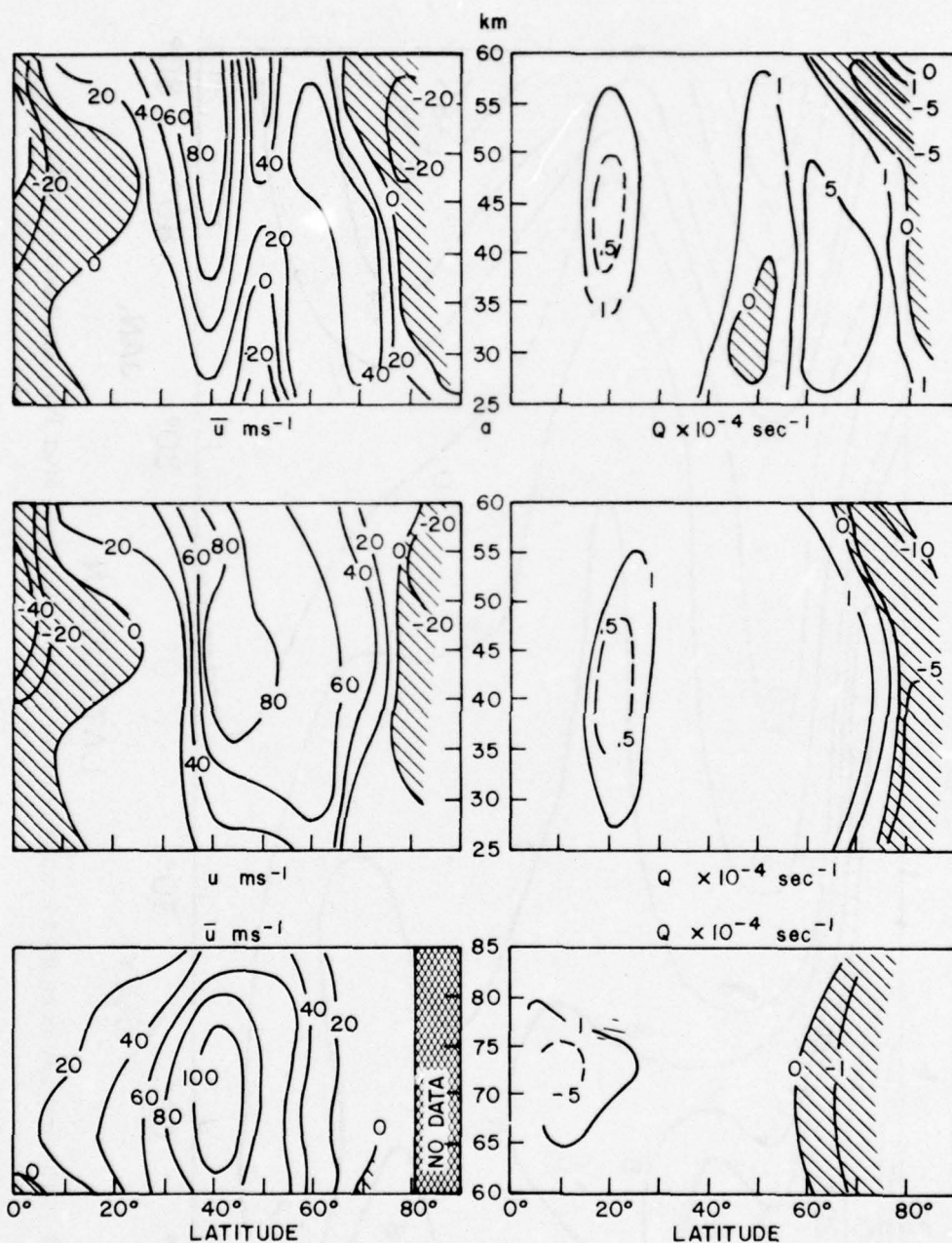


Fig. 5 — The zonal wind model (left) and value of Q defined in text (right) computed for CIRA (1972) Northern American data (top), CIRA (1972) West European data (center), and all longitudes for the mesosphere (bottom). Wind profiles for January were used in all instances. Sign changes in Q are necessary conditions for instability in the wind profile.

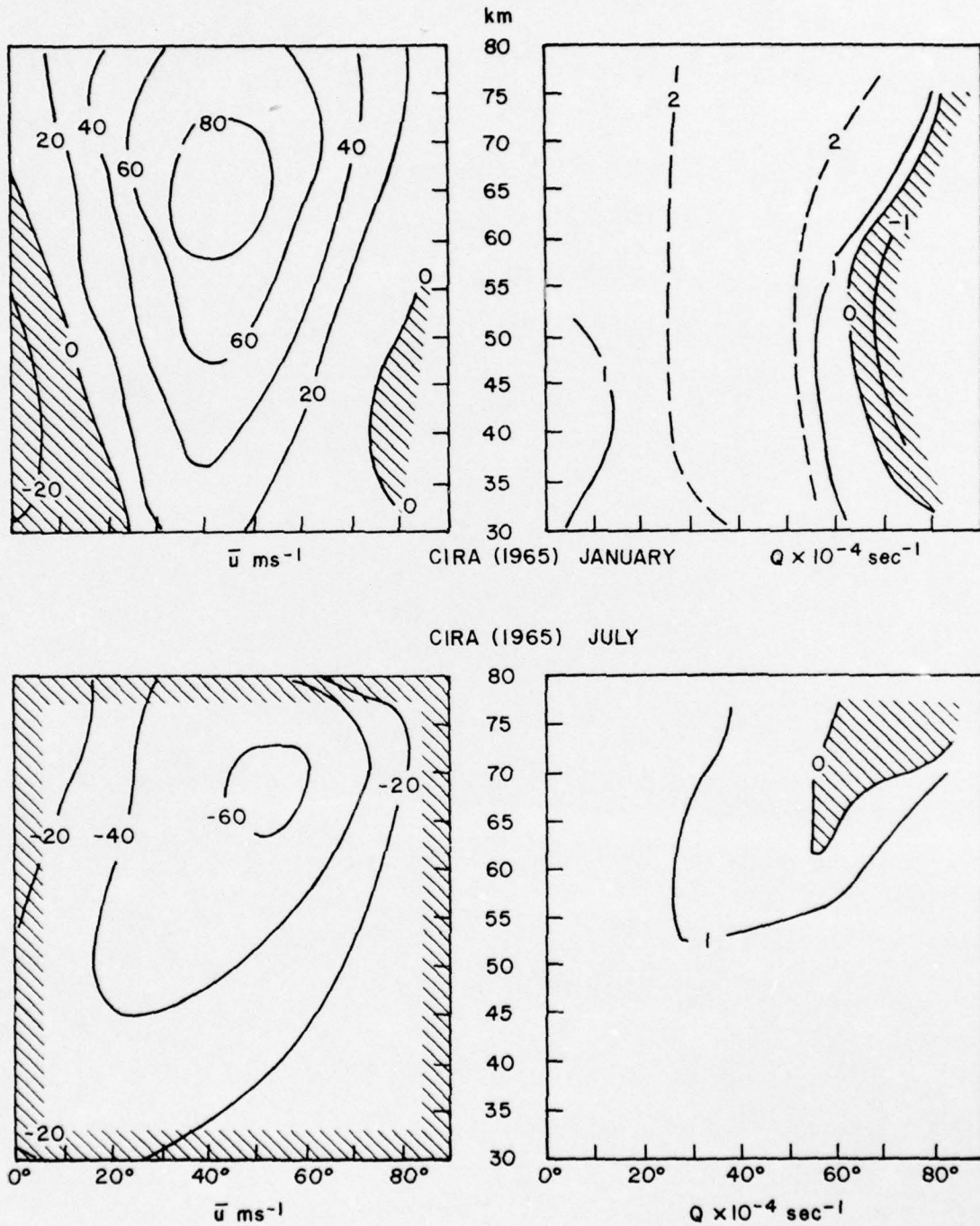


Fig. 6 — Same as Fig. 5 for CIRA (1965) model atmosphere for January and July

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