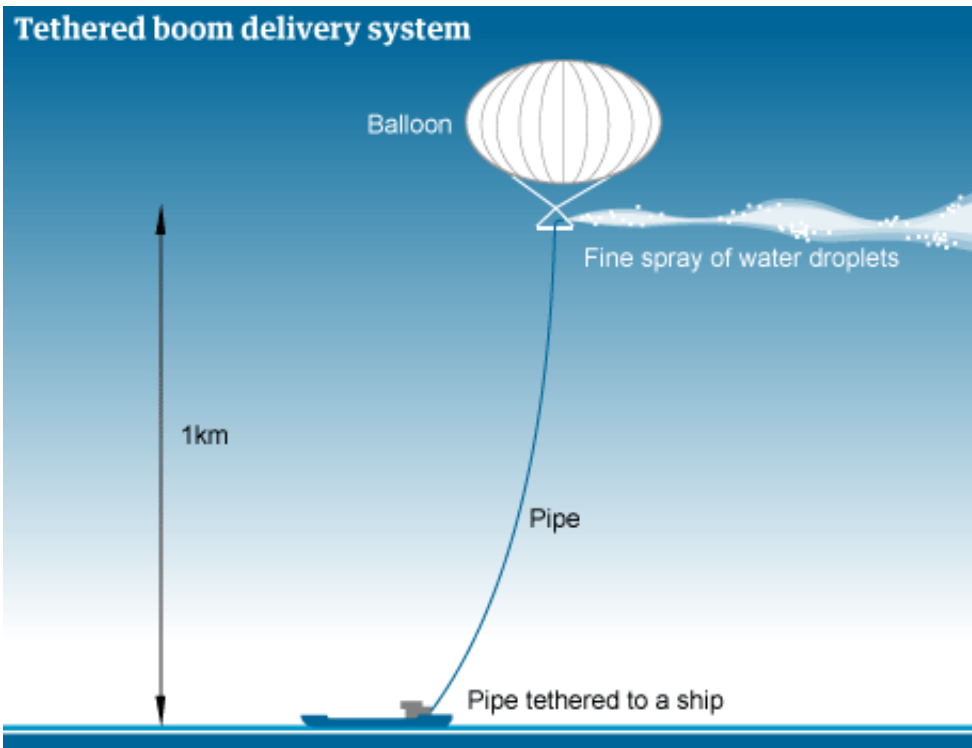


British team set to field test gigantic balloon and water hose geo-engineering experiment

September 2 2011, by Bob Yirka



(PhysOrg.com) -- In what to some might seem almost ludicrous, (think Dr. Strangelove,) a British team of geo-engineers are set to launch a giant balloon a half mile into the sky pulling with it a water hose that will then spray water pumped from the ground, into the air. But this is only the beginning; the idea is to see if such a system is feasible. The real goal is to see if it might be possible to send such a giant balloon much higher,

say twice as high as airplanes fly, so as to release aerosols into the atmosphere to mimic the impact volcanoes have when they erupt. That is to cause a planetary cooling effect, to offset the warming effect of all the carbon emissions still being pumped full time into air. And that's not all, the project dubbed Stratospheric Particle Injection for Climate Engineering (SPICE), is being backed by the British government, via the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council.

Most would agree that we do have a problem on our hands, the Earth is slowly growing warmer, threatening water and food supplies, if not eventually our very existence. Many question however, the wisdom of pumping aerosols into the [atmosphere](#) to reflect some of the sun's heat back into space, rather than simply figuring out a way to stop adding more [carbon emissions](#).

The initial test of the plan is slated to be carried out next month in an undisclosed location. There the team will send up a smaller version of the eventual behemoth, somewhere around two thirds of a mile (about a kilometer) high. In this test, nothing but water will be squirted into the air, though some suggest they might also try something called low-level cloud whitening, which is where sea salt would be pumped up and then dispersed into the air to increase the reflectivity of clouds.

If successful, the team would then set to work in constructing the actual product, a balloon that some say would have to be as big as Wembley stadium and would weigh as much as several double-decker busses (this is a British project after all). Then, the balloon would be sent aloft to a height of twelve miles or so (20 kilometers) carrying with it something akin to a very long garden hose. Once up, a mixture of sulphates and/or [aerosols](#) would be pumped up the hose and then into the air, which would then, theoretically start reflecting heat back out into space; saving us all in the process.

If the mechanics of the project do eventually work as planned, there will likely be much debate about actually carrying out its mission, as some will undoubtedly be very much against carrying out a mission where no one really knows what might happen.

More information: via [Guardian](#)

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Citation: British team set to field test gigantic balloon and water hose geo-engineering experiment (2011, September 2) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-09-british-team-field-gigantic-balloon.html>

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