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# *Intercontinental influence of NO[subscript x] and CO emissions on particulate matter air quality*

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**Citation:** Leibensperger, Eric M., Loretta J. Mickley, Daniel J. Jacob, and Steven R.H. Barrett. "Intercontinental Influence of NO[subscript x] and CO Emissions on Particulate Matter Air Quality." Atmospheric Environment 45, no. 19 (June 2011): 3318–3324.

**As Published:** http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.atmosenv.2011.02.023

**Publisher:** Elsevier

**Persistent URL:** <http://hdl.handle.net/1721.1/99449>

**Version:** Author's final manuscript: final author's manuscript post peer review, without publisher's formatting or copy editing

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- **Intercontinental influence of NOx and CO emissions on particulate matter air**
- **quality**
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- **Submitted October 8, 2010**
- **Revised January 31, 2011**
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## 23 **Abstract**

24 Anthropogenic emissions of nitrogen oxides ( $NO<sub>x</sub> \equiv NO + NO<sub>2</sub>$ ) and carbon monoxide (CO) 25 affect particulate matter (PM) air quality on an intercontinental scale by changing background 26 concentrations of oxidants (OH, ozone,  $H_2O_2$ ) and thus increasing the oxidation rate of sulfur 27 dioxide  $(SO_2)$  to sulfate and  $NO_x$  to nitrate. We conduct sensitivity simulations with the GEOS-28 Chem chemical transport model and find that these intercontinental influences of  $NO<sub>x</sub>$  and CO 29 emissions on PM can be greater than those from  $SO_2$  emissions (a direct PM precursor). The 30 intercontinental impact of oxidant precursors is greatest in receptor regions with high domestic  $31$  SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, and ammonia emissions and hence already high levels of PM. US NO<sub>x</sub> and CO emissions increase annual mean PM in northern Europe and eastern China by up to 0.25 μg m<sup>-3</sup>. 33 The increase in Europe is mostly as sulfate, whereas in China it is mostly as nitrate. East Asian 34 NO<sub>x</sub> and CO emissions have a weaker intercontinental influence ( $\sim$ 0.2 μg m<sup>-3</sup> in northern Europe, 35  $\sim$  0.1 µg m<sup>-3</sup> in the eastern US). These intercontinental effects of NO<sub>x</sub> and CO emissions on PM 36 depend in a complex way on the chemical environment of receptor regions. Intercomparison of 37 results from different models would be of great interest.

### **1. Introduction**

 Developed countries worldwide regulate domestic sources of particulate matter (PM) to meet air quality goals designed to protect public health and visibility. These regulations may involve neighboring countries to address transboundary transport. However, PM can also be transported on intercontinental scales with significant implications for air quality in the receptor continent (Park et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2009a). Here we show that this intercontinental influence on PM does not only involve emissions of PM and its direct precursors from the source continent, but 46 also emissions of nitrogen oxides ( $NO<sub>x</sub> \equiv NO + NO<sub>2</sub>$ ) and CO that affect PM through global perturbations to oxidant concentrations. There has been much recent interest in quantifying the intercontinental transport of PM pollution (Jaffe et al., 1999; Park et al., 2004; Heald et al., 2006; Chin et al., 2007; Liu et al., 2009b). Intercontinental transport of desert dust and of plumes from large forest fires has long been recognized as a contributor to surface PM (Prospero, 1999; Forster et al., 2001; Husar et al., 2001; Fairlie et al., 2007). Surface, aircraft, and satellite observations have identified episodic transport of anthropogenic PM across the Pacific (Jaffe et al., 1999; Jaffe et al., 2003; Yu et al., 2008). Global models indicate annual mean sulfate enhancements in US surface air of up to 0.2  $\mu$ g m<sup>-3</sup> from anthropogenic Asian SO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Park et al., 2004; Heald et al., 2006; Chin et al., 2007). Direct intercontinental transport of anthropogenic organic and nitrate aerosols appears to be far less important based on both observational and modeling evidence (Heald et al., 2006; Peltier et al., 2008; van Donkelaar et al., 2008).



# **2. Model Simulations**





129 US and 10 Tg N  $a^{-1}$  and 27 Tg S  $a^{-1}$  from East Asia. US anthropogenic emissions of CO are from

130 the EPA National Emissions Inventory 1999 (NEI99;

131 [http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/1999inventory.html\)](http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/1999inventory.html) and amount to 82 Tg CO  $a^{-1}$ . East Asian

fossil anthropogenic emissions of CO are from Streets et al. (2006), and amount to 250 Tg CO a-132

133 <sup>1</sup>. Ammonia emissions are from Bouwman et al. (1997). Additional source information for the

134 model is available from van Donkelaar et al. (2008).

135

136 **3. Intercontinental PM enhancements** 

### 137 **3.1 Effect of US emissions**

138 Figure 1 shows the annual mean PM enhancements in Europe and Asia from US anthropogenic 139 sources of  $SO_2$ ,  $NO_x$ , and CO as calculated by GEOS-Chem. PM enhancements are diagnosed as 140 the differences in surface air concentrations of dry sulfate, nitrate, ammonium, and organic 141 aerosol between the control simulation and a simulation with the corresponding emissions shut 142 off. Figure 2 shows the SNA speciation and seasonality of this enhancement for receptor regions 143 (outlined as boxes in Figure 1). Intercontinental enhancements in organic aerosol concentrations 144 are small  $(< 5 \text{ ng m}^{-3})$  and will not be discussed further.

145

146 The intercontinental effects of  $SO_2$  emissions arise from the direct transport of  $SO_2$  and sulfate, 147 and decrease rapidly with distance downwind due to wet and dry removal. US  $SO_2$  emissions thus mainly influence western Europe, by up to 0.2  $\mu$ g m<sup>-3</sup> on an annual mean basis. This 149 enhancement is comparable to the results of Park et al. (2004), but larger than those of Chin et al. 150 (2007) and Liu et al. (2009b). Increases in sulfate are partly offset by decreases in nitrate due to 151 competition for ammonium (West et al., 1999; Park et al., 2004). US SO<sub>2</sub> emissions actually

152 induce a net decrease in PM over eastern China in winter because the replacement of  $2NH<sub>4</sub>NO<sub>3</sub>$ 153 by  $(NH_4)$ <sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> results in net loss of PM mass.

154

155 We find that US  $NO<sub>x</sub>$  emissions enhance European and Asian PM concentrations by up to 0.25 156  $\mu$ g m<sup>-3</sup> on an annual basis. The patterns in Figure 1 show that this is not due to direct 157 intercontinental transport of nitrate and its precursors, but to an increase in background oxidant 158 levels that promotes formation of sulfate and nitrate from local sources of  $SO_2$  and  $NO_x$  in the 159 receptor regions. US  $NO<sub>x</sub>$  emissions increase annual mean tropospheric ozone by 3.3%, OH by 160 3.3%, and  $H_2O_2$  by 0.2% in the Northern Hemisphere, with larger effects in Europe, which is 161 directly downwind.

162

163 Figure 2 shows that the intercontinental PM enhancement from US  $NO<sub>x</sub>$  emissions is mostly 164 driven by sulfate in northern Europe but by nitrate in eastern China. Conversion of  $SO_2$  to sulfate 165 in the model is mostly by in-cloud oxidation by  $H_2O_2$  and ozone. The process by  $H_2O_2$  is faster 166 than that by ozone, and in the presence of excess  $H_2O_2$ ,  $SO_2$  oxidation is insensitive to increases 167 in oxidants. At the high latitudes of northern Europe,  $H_2O_2$  production is slow so that  $SO_2$  in-168 cloud oxidation is  $H_2O_2$ -limited over  $SO_2$  source regions for most of the year; thus increases of 169 ozone and  $H_2O_2$  result in increased sulfate. The sulfate increase is largest in fall due to a 170 combination of extensive cloud cover and significant enhancement of oxidants. Cloud cover is 171 also extensive in winter but the increase in oxidants is then less. In eastern China, by contrast to 172 northern Europe,  $H_2O_2$ -limited conditions prevail only in winter, and cloud cover is then 173 infrequent due to the winter monsoon.



## **3.2 Effect of Asian emissions**

 Figure 3 shows the intercontinental increases in PM from Asian emissions. The intercontinental 196 influence of Asian  $SO_2$  emissions are strongest in the western US where subsidence from the free troposphere brings Asian outflow to the surface. The enhancement of 0.1-0.25 μg m<sup>-3</sup> in this

198 region is comparable to the results of Park et al. (2004), Heald et al. (2006), and Chin et al.

199 (2007). The effect on Europe is weaker and more uniform than that of US  $SO_2$  emissions, which

200 are closer upwind (Figure 1). Increases in sulfate cause lower levels of nitrate due to competition

- 201 for ammonium, similar to the effects of US  $SO_2$  emissions previously discussed.
- 202

203 The intercontinental influence of Asian  $NO<sub>x</sub>$  on PM shown in Figure 3 is weaker than that of US 204 emissions (Figure 1). Asian  $NO<sub>x</sub>$  emissions increase annual mean tropospheric ozone by 8.8%, 205 OH by 12.7%, and  $H_2O_2$  by 1.1%. These increases are much larger than those from US emissions 206 (section 3.1), but the effect on PM is also contingent on emissions in the receptor continent. Thus 207 the effect on the US is relatively weak, up to 0.1  $\mu$ g m<sup>-3</sup> over the central US where excess 208 ammonia from agricultural emissions promotes ammonium nitrate formation. The effect on 209 northern Europe (up to 0.2  $\mu$ g m<sup>-3</sup>) is also weaker than for US emissions, which are closer 210 upwind (Figure 1). Figure 4 shows that sulfate accounts for most of the overall increase in PM 211 over the eastern US and northern Europe. The increase is weakest in summer when Asian  $NO<sub>x</sub>$ 212 emissions actually cause  $H_2O_2$  concentrations to decrease over the US and Europe. This reflects 213 the large Asian source of  $NO_x$  and complicated effects of  $NO_x$  emissions on  $H_2O_2$ . On the one 214 hand, NO<sub>x</sub> leads to ozone production and from there to  $H_2O_2$  production. On the other hand, NO<sub>x</sub> 215 increases OH, which is a major  $H_2O_2$  sink.

216

217 Asian CO emissions decrease annual mean tropospheric OH by 5.6% and increase ozone by

- 218 3.1% and  $H_2O_2$  by 9.4%. Figures 3 and 4 show that Asian CO affects northern European PM in a
- 219 very similar manner to US CO emissions (Figures 1 and 2) and with a similar magnitude as
- 220 Asian NO<sub>x</sub>. Similar to the effect of US CO emissions, Asian CO emissions increase in-cloud

221 sulfate production by  $H_2O_2$  over Europe causing sulfate enhancements in all seasons. Changes in 222 sulfate in the US are largely driven by increased production by  $H_2O_2$ . A reduction in gas-phase 223 production of sulfate by OH detracts from increased aqueous production. Nitrate concentrations 224 decrease in both northern Europe and the US because of the lower OH concentrations.

225

#### 226 **4. Discussion**

227 Anthropogenic emissions of  $NO<sub>x</sub>$  and CO perturb sulfate and nitrate PM concentrations on 228 intercontinental scales by affecting the background concentrations of oxidants and hence the 229 oxidation rates of  $SO_2$  and  $NO_x$  emitted in receptor regions.  $NO_x$  emissions cause OH, ozone, 230 and  $H_2O_2$  to increase on the hemispheric scale although  $H_2O_2$  can decrease in some regions and 231 seasons. CO emissions cause OH to decrease, but ozone and  $H_2O_2$  concentrations to increase. 232 CO increases  $H_2O_2$  formation in part by decreasing OH, a major sink of  $H_2O_2$  and in part by 233 decreasing the OH/HO<sub>2</sub> ratio and thus promoting  $H_2O_2$  formation. Most of the intercontinental 234 effect on sulfate is through increases in ozone and  $H_2O_2$ , which drive faster  $SO_2$  in-cloud 235 oxidation under  $H_2O_2$ -limited conditions. Most of the effect of nitrate is through the increase in 236 ozone in winter and the shoulder seasons, when  $NO<sub>x</sub>$  oxidation is otherwise slow and the cold 237 temperatures promote nitrate fractionation into the aerosol.

238

239 The intercontinental PM enhancement from  $NO<sub>x</sub>$  and CO emissions tends to peak in receptor 240 regions with the highest domestic sources of  $SO_2$ ,  $NO_x$ , and  $NH_3$ , and hence with the highest PM 241 concentrations. It is thus of particular policy relevance. US emissions of  $NO<sub>x</sub>$  and CO increase 242 PM by over 0.25  $\mu$ g m<sup>-3</sup> (annual mean) in polluted regions of northern Europe and eastern China, 243 a much larger effect than that of US  $SO_2$  emissions. PM concentrations in the US are less



267 interest to carry out a multi-model intercomparison of intercontinental influences of  $NO<sub>x</sub>$  and CO emissions on PM.

## **Acknowledgements**

- This work was supported by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) and an Environmental
- Protection Agency Science to Achieve Results (EPA-STAR) Program Graduate Fellowship to
- Eric Leibensperger. EPRI and EPA have not officially reviewed or endorsed this publication and
- the views expressed herein may not reflect those of EPRI and EPA. This work has benefitted
- from discussions with Jenny Fisher, Christopher Holmes, Eloïse Marais, and Lin Zhang and
- useful comments from Naresh Kumar and Eladio Knipping.

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#### **Figure Captions**

**Figure 1 -** Annual mean enhancements of surface PM concentrations in Europe and Asia from

471 US anthropogenic emissions of  $SO_2$  (top),  $NO_x$  (middle), and CO (bottom). Values are

differences between the control GEOS-Chem simulation and a sensitivity simulation with US

anthropogenic emissions shut off. Boxes in the top panels outline receptor regions in northern

Europe and eastern China for which speciation and seasonality are shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2 –** Speciation of sulfate-nitrate-ammonium (SNA) PM concentrations in surface air for

the receptor regions of Figure 1 (left panels) and corresponding intercontinental enhancements

477 from US anthropogenic emissions of  $SO_2$ ,  $NO_x$ , and  $CO$  (right panels). Values are seasonal

means from the GEOS-Chem model. Seasonal concentrations have been divided by 100

(Northern Europe) and 200 (Eastern China) to fit on scale.

**Figure 3 -** Annual mean enhancements of surface PM concentrations in Europe and the United

481 States from Asian anthropogenic emissions of  $SO_2$  (top),  $NO_x$  (middle), and CO (bottom).

Values are differences between the control GEOS-Chem simulation and a sensitivity simulation

with Asian anthropogenic sources shut off. Boxes in the top panels outline the receptor region in

the United States for which speciation and seasonality are shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4 –** Speciation of sulfate-nitrate-ammonium (SNA) PM concentrations in surface air for

the receptor regions of Figures 1 and 2 (left panels) and corresponding intercontinental

487 enhancements from US anthropogenic emissions of  $SO_2$ ,  $NO_x$ , and CO (right panels). Values are

seasonal means from the GEOS-Chem model. Seasonal concentrations from the control

simulation have been divided by 100 to fit on scale.

**Figure**

PM<sub>2.5</sub> Enhancement from US SO<sub>2</sub>







PM<sub>2.5</sub> Enhancement from Asian SO<sub>2</sub>

# Northern Europe

![](_page_23_Figure_2.jpeg)