

# **ECMWF Training Course on Data Assimilation**

## **The Analysis of Satellite Data**

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13 March 2014

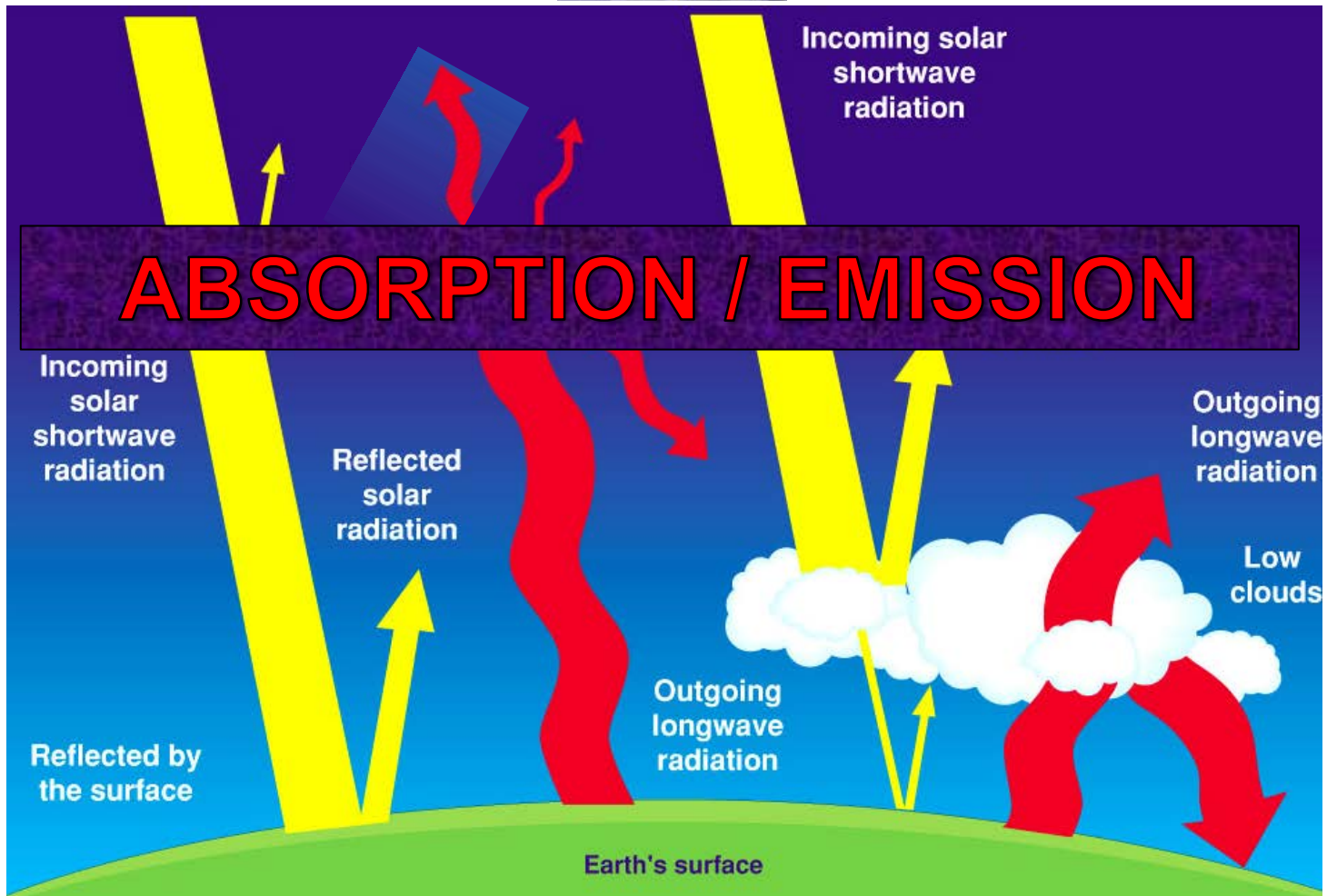
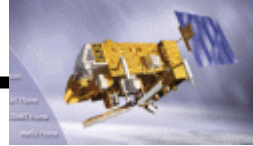
**What do satellite  
instruments measure ?**

They **DO NOT** measure TEMPERATURE

They **DO NOT** measure HUMIDITY or OZONE

They **DO NOT** measure WIND

# SATELLITES CAN ONLY MEASURE OUTGOING RADIATION FROM THE ATMOSPHERE

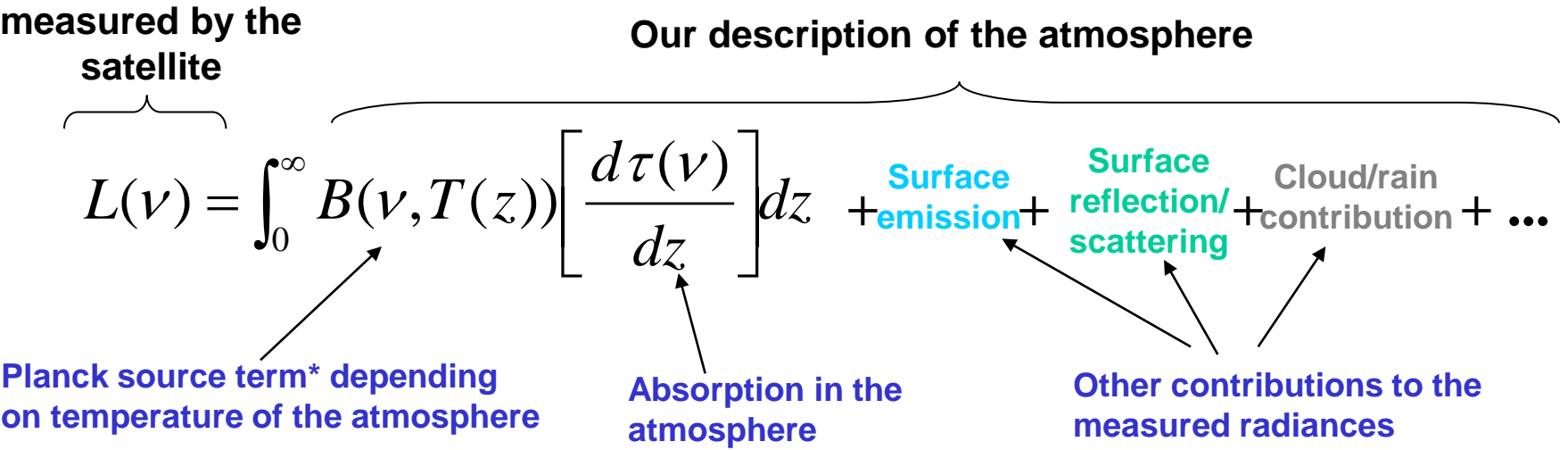


# What do satellite instruments measure?

Satellite instruments measure the **radiance**  $L$  that reaches the top of the atmosphere at given **frequency**  $\nu$ .

The measured radiance is **related** to geophysical atmospheric variables ( $T, Q, O_3$ , clouds etc...) by the

## Radiative Transfer Equation

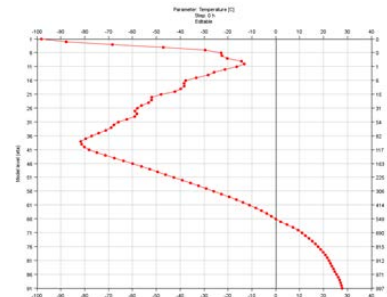
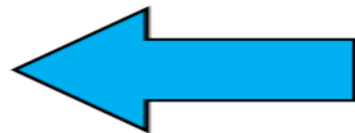
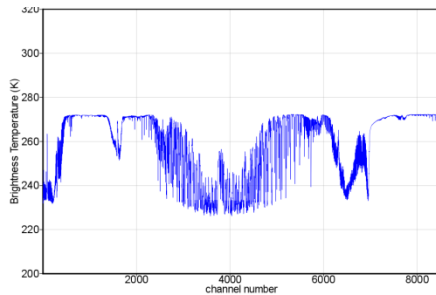


# The Radiative Transfer (RT) equation

measured by the  
satellite

depends on the state of the atmosphere

$$L(\nu) = \int_0^\infty B(\nu, T(z)) \left[ \frac{d\tau(\nu)}{dz} \right] dz + \text{Surface emission} + \text{Surface reflection/scattering} + \text{Cloud/rain contribution} + \dots$$



# The Radiative Transfer (RT) equation

“Forward problem”

measured by the  
satellite

depends on the state of the atmosphere

$$L(\nu) = \int_0^\infty B(\nu, T(z)) \left[ \frac{d\tau(\nu)}{dz} \right] dz + \text{Surface emission} + \text{Surface reflection/scattering} + \text{Cloud/rain contribution} + \dots$$

*...given the state of the atmosphere, what is the radiance...?*

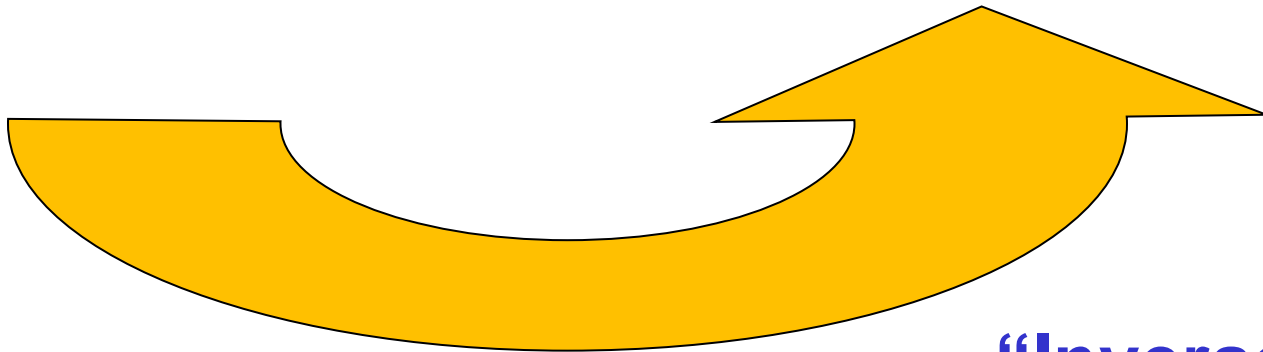
# The Radiative Transfer (RT) equation

*...given the radiance, what is the state of the atmosphere...?*

measured by the  
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$$L(\nu) = \int_0^\infty B(\nu, T(z)) \left[ \frac{d\tau(\nu)}{dz} \right] dz + \text{Surface emission} + \text{Surface reflection/scattering} + \text{Cloud/rain contribution} + \dots$$



**“Inverse problem”**



# The Radiative Transfer (RT) equation

“Forward problem”

OBSERVATION OPERATOR

measured by the  
satellite

depends on the state of the atmosphere

$$L(\nu) = \int_0^\infty B(\nu, T(z)) \left[ \frac{d\tau(\nu)}{dz} \right] dz + \text{Surface emission} + \text{Surface reflection/scattering} + \text{Cloud/rain contribution} + \dots$$

MINIMISATION

“Inverse problem”

**How can we simplify  
the forward and  
inverse problems**

**?**

# Channel selection

# Measuring radiances in different frequencies (channels)

By deliberately **selecting** radiation at different frequencies or **CHANNELS** satellite instruments can provide information on specific geophysical variables for different regions of the atmosphere.

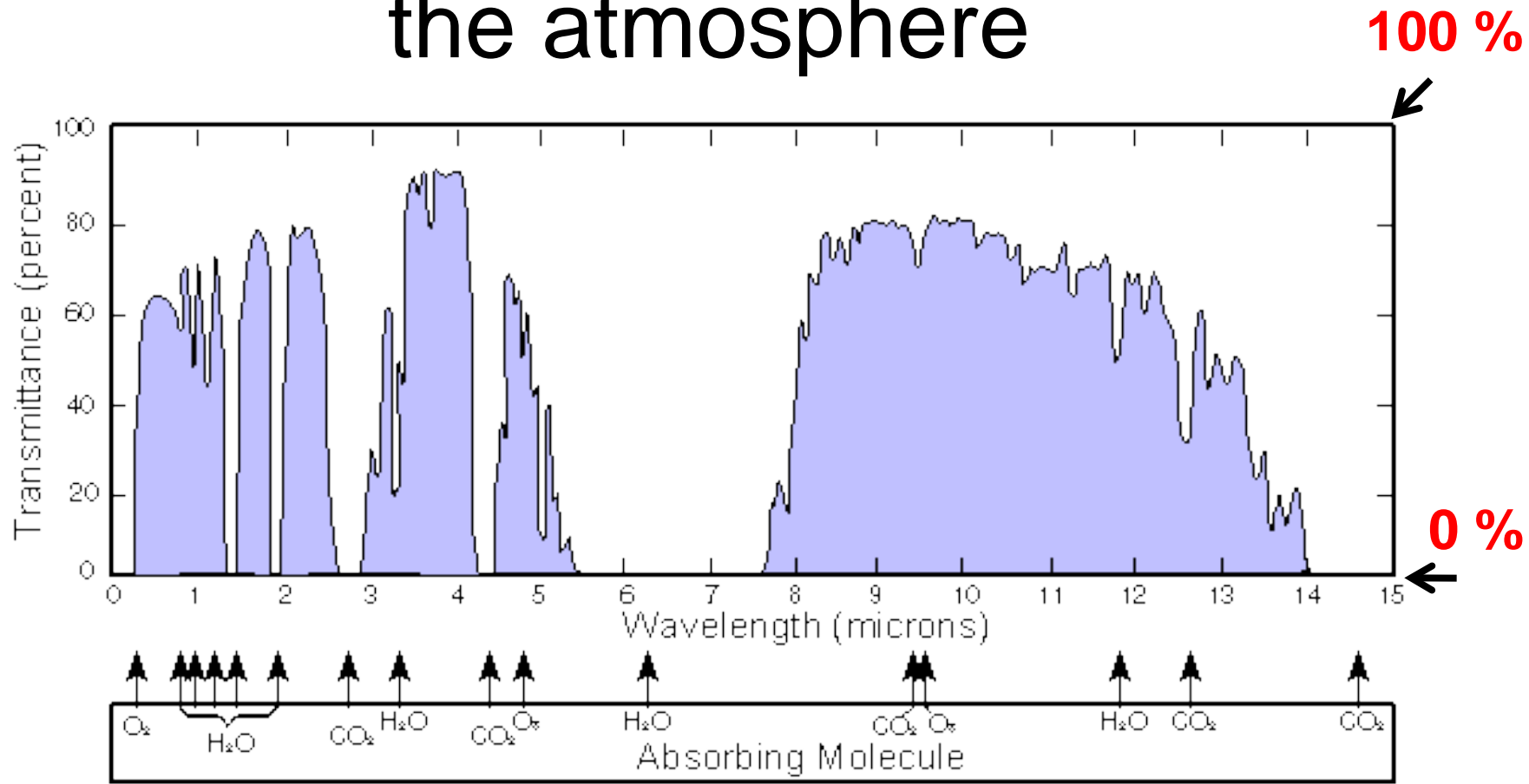
In general, the frequencies / channels used within NWP may be categorized as one of **3** different types ...

1. **atmospheric sounding** channels (**passive** instruments)
2. **surface sensing** channels (**passive** instruments)
3. **surface sensing** channels (**active** instruments)

## Note:

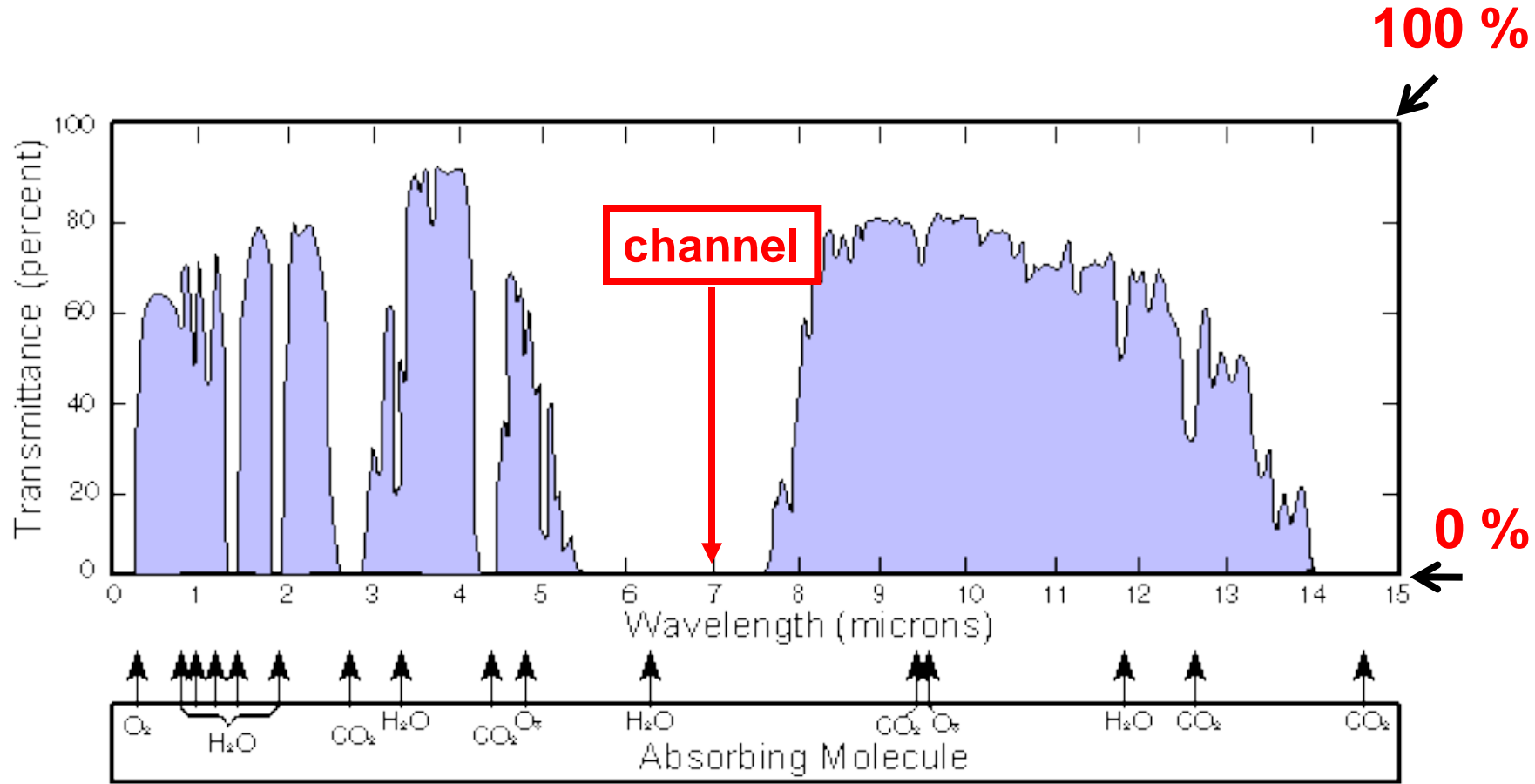
*In practice (and often despite their name!) real satellite instruments have channels which are a **combination** of atmospheric sounding and surface sensing channels*

# Example: absorption of infrared radiation in the atmosphere

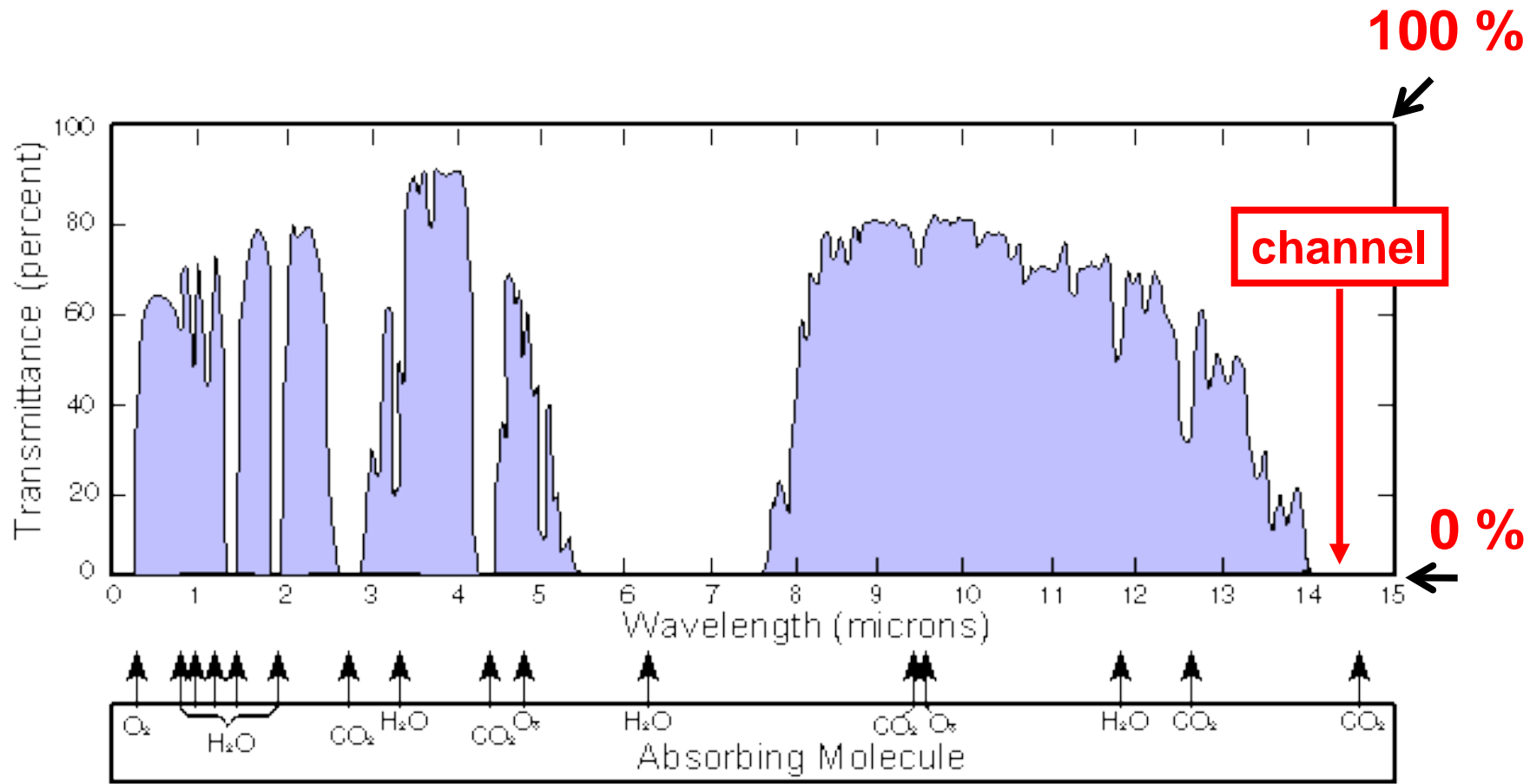


# **Atmospheric sounding channels**

# Atmospheric sounding channels

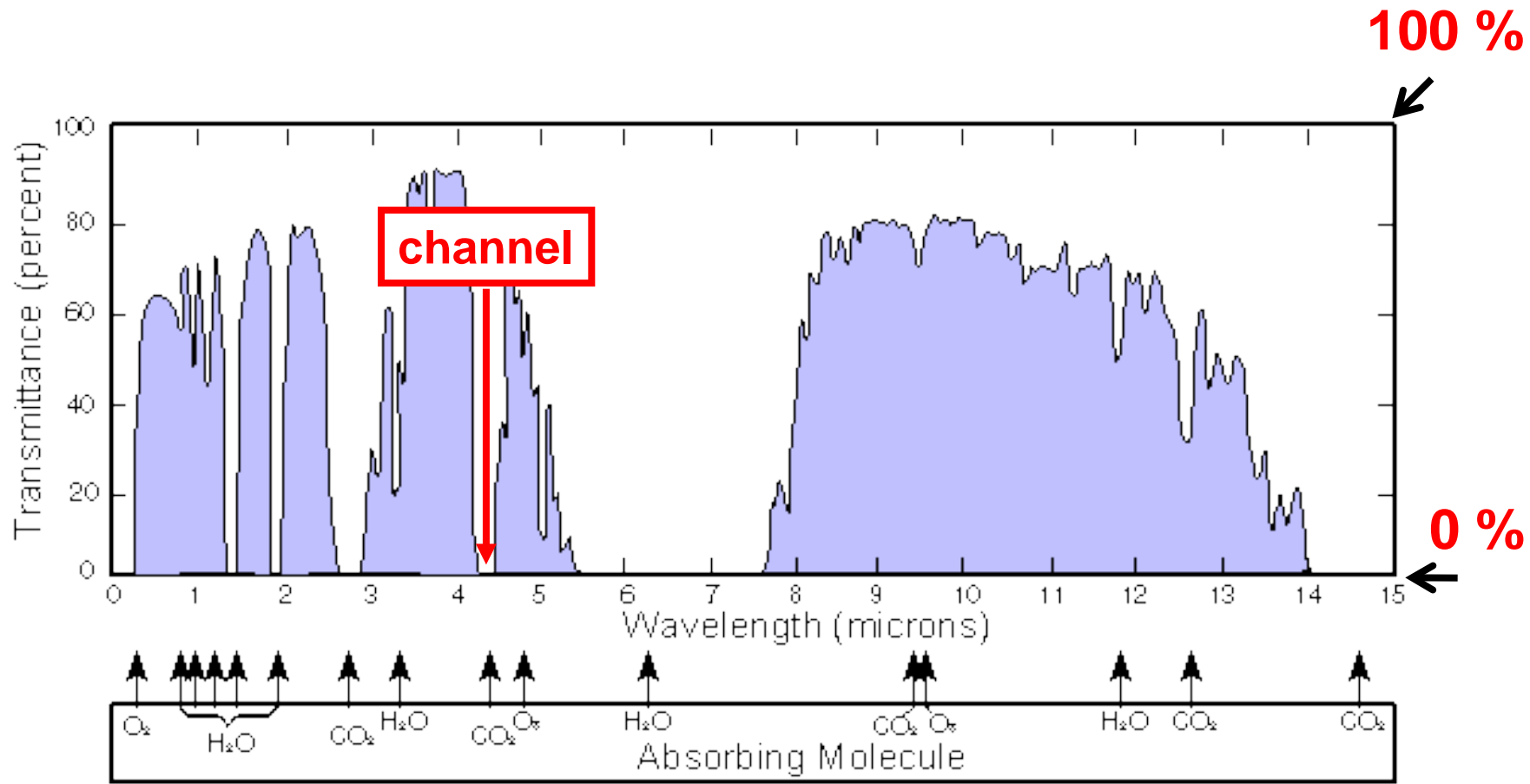


# Atmospheric sounding channels





# Atmospheric sounding channels



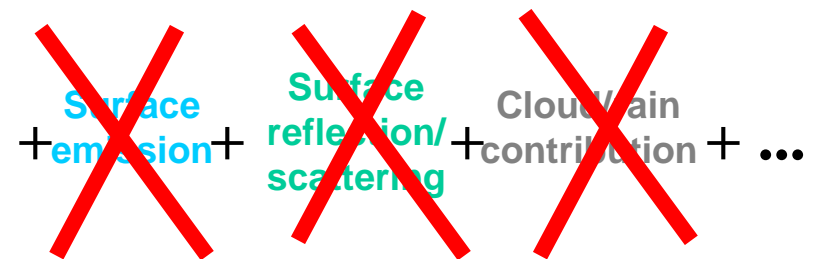
# Atmospheric sounding channels

...selecting channels where there is **no** contribution from the **surface**....

$$L(\nu) = \int_0^{\infty} B(\nu, T(z)) \left[ \frac{d\tau(\nu)}{dz} \right] dz + \text{Surface emission} + \text{Surface reflection/scattering} + \text{Cloud/rain contribution} + \dots$$

# Atmospheric sounding channels

...selecting channels where there is **no** contribution from the **surface**....

$$L(\nu) = \int_0^{\infty} B(\nu, T(z)) \left[ \frac{d\tau(\nu)}{dz} \right] dz + \text{Surface emission} + \text{Surface reflection/scattering} + \text{Cloud/rain contribution} + \dots$$


# ATMOSPHERIC SOUNDING CHANNELS

These channels are located in parts of the infra-red and microwave spectrum for which the main contribution to the measured radiance is from the **atmosphere** and can be written:

$$L(\nu) \approx \int_0^{\infty} B(\nu, T(z)) \left[ \frac{d\tau(\nu)}{dz} \right] dz$$

Where  $B$  = Planck function

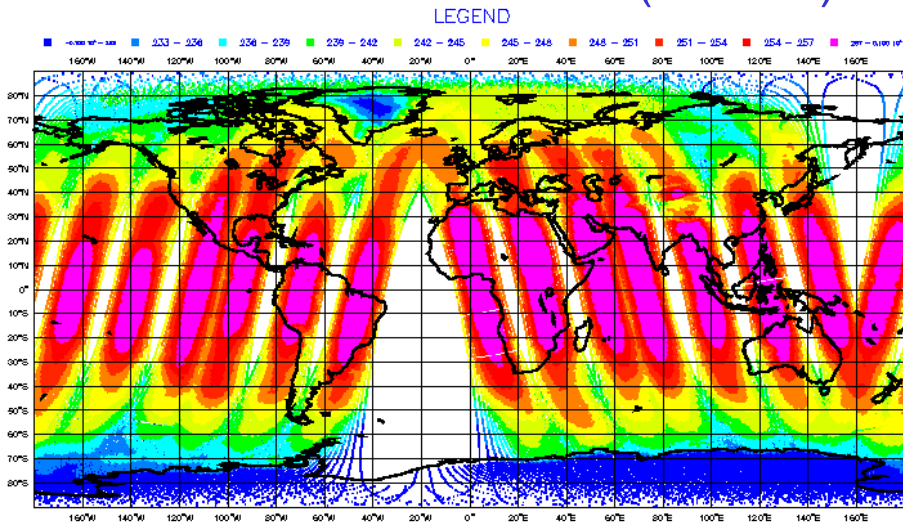
$t$  = transmittance

$T(z)$  is the temperature

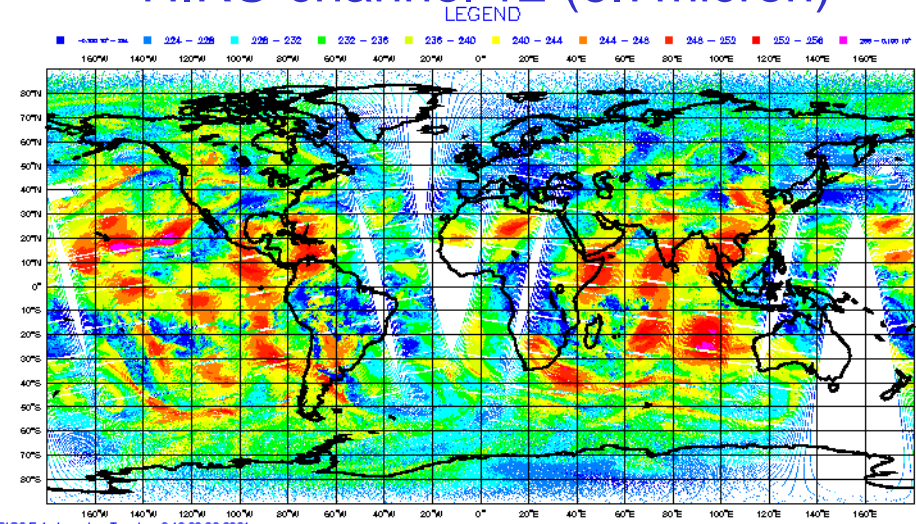
$z$  is a height coordinate

That is they try to **avoid** frequencies for which **surface radiation** and cloud contributions are important. They are primarily used to obtain **information about atmospheric temperature and humidity** (or other constituents that influence the transmittance e.g. CO<sub>2</sub>).

AMSUA-channel 5 (53GHz)

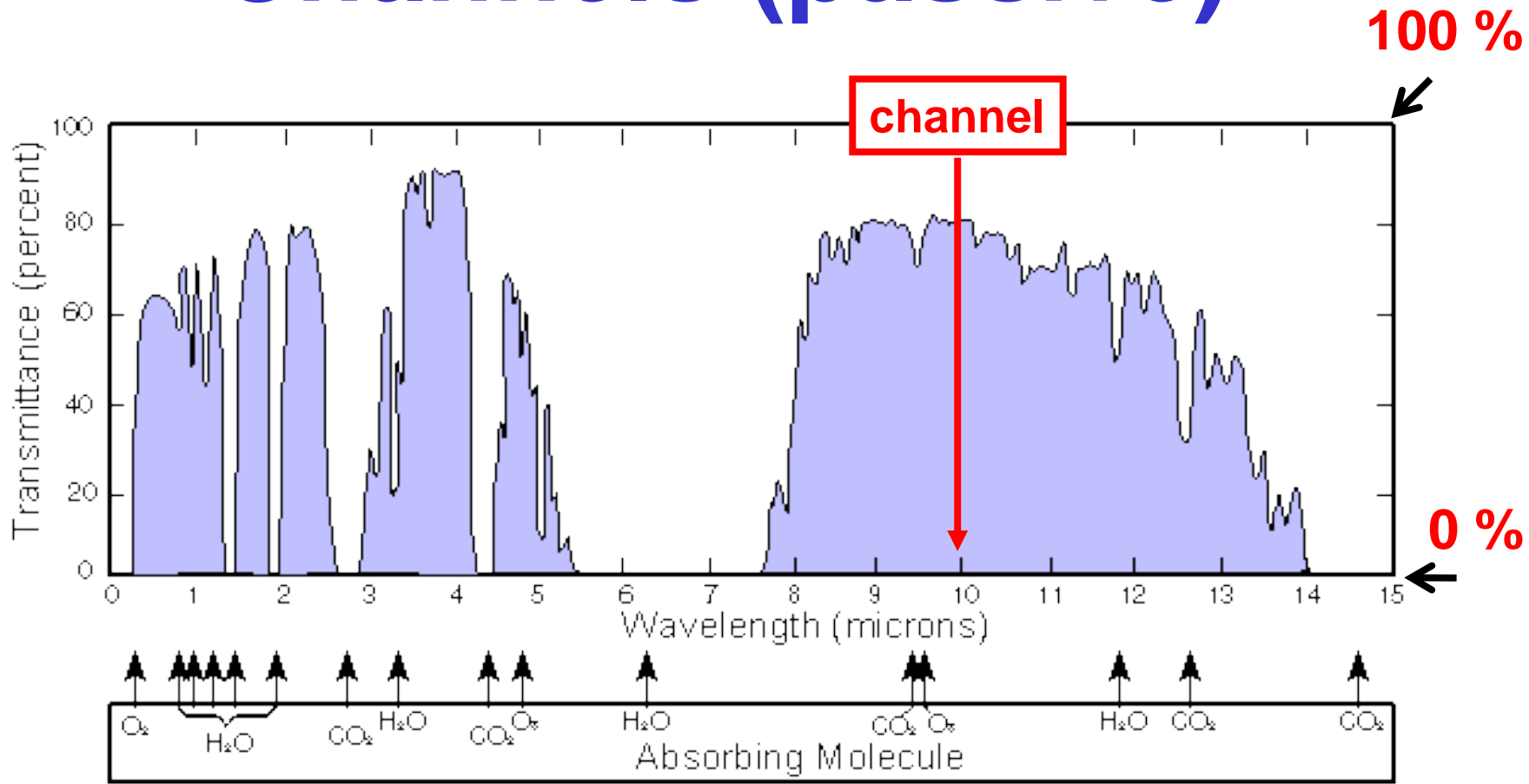


HIRS-channel 12 (6.7micron)

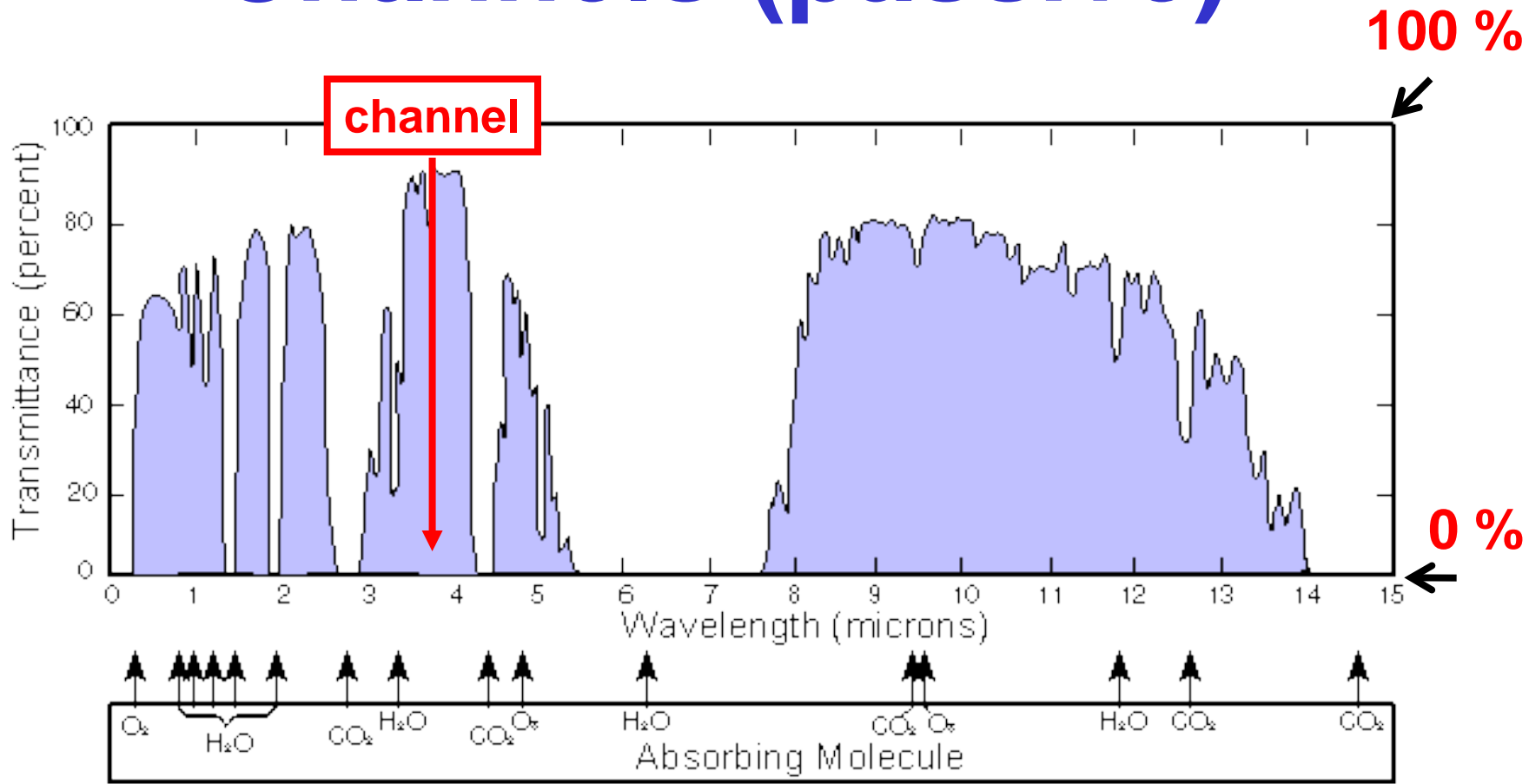


# **Surface sensing Channels (passive)**

# Surface sensing Channels (passive)



# Surface sensing Channels (passive)



# Surface sensing Channels (passive)

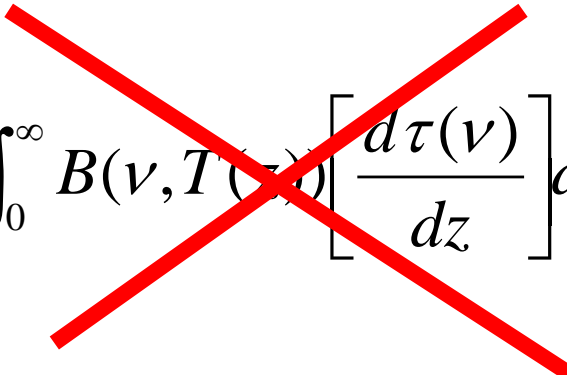
...selecting channels where there is **no** contribution from the **atmosphere**....

$$L(\nu) = \int_0^{\infty} B(\nu, T(z)) \left[ \frac{d\tau(\nu)}{dz} \right] dz + \text{Surface emission} + \text{Surface reflection/scattering} + \text{Cloud/rain contribution} + \dots$$



# Surface sensing Channels (passive)

...selecting channels where there is **no** contribution from the **atmosphere**....

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# Surface sensing Channels (passive)

...selecting channels where there is **no** contribution from the **atmosphere**....

The diagram illustrates the cancellation of atmospheric terms in the radiance equation for surface sensing channels. The equation is shown with a large red 'X' over it, indicating it is not applicable. The equation is:

$$L(\nu) = \int_0^\infty B(\nu, T(z)) \left[ \frac{d\tau(\nu)}{dz} \right] dz + \text{Surface emission} + \text{Surface reflection/scattering} + \text{Cloud/rain contribution} + \dots$$

The terms "Surface emission" and "Surface reflection/scattering" are crossed out with a red 'X'. An arrow points from the text "IR ~ zero" below to the "Surface reflection/scattering" term, indicating that this term is zero in the selected channels.

# Surface sensing Channels (passive)

...selecting channels where there is **no** contribution from the **atmosphere**....

The diagram illustrates the process of selecting surface sensing channels by canceling out atmospheric contributions. It features the following elements:

- Equation:** 
$$L(\nu) = \int_0^\infty B(\nu, T(z)) \left[ \frac{d\tau(\nu)}{dz} \right] dz$$
 This equation is crossed out with a large red 'X'.
- Terms:** To the right of the equation, the terms are listed as:  $+ \text{Surface emission} + \text{Surface reflection/scattering} + \text{Cloud/rain contribution} + \dots$ .
  - Surface emission:** In blue text.
  - Surface reflection/scattering:** In green text.
  - Cloud/rain contribution:** In grey text.
- Annotations:**
  - Red 'X' marks are placed over the 'Surface reflection/scattering' and 'Cloud/rain contribution' terms.
  - An upward-pointing arrow from the text 'Screen data to remove clouds / rain' points to the 'Cloud/rain contribution' term.

# SURFACE SENSING CHANNELS (PASSIVE)

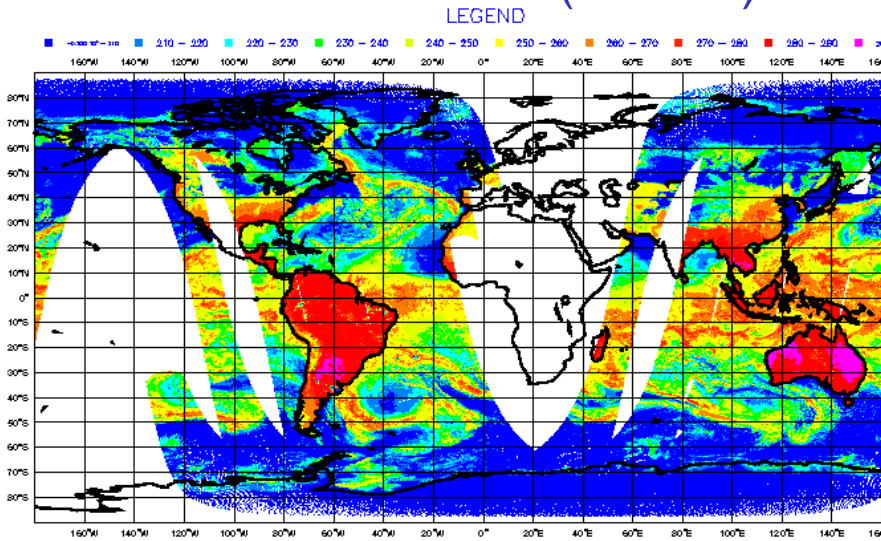
These are located in **window regions** of the infra-red and microwave spectrum at frequencies where there is very little interaction with the atmosphere and the primary contribution to the measured radiance is:

$$L(\nu) \approx B[\nu, T_{\text{surf}}] \epsilon(\nu) \quad (\text{i.e. surface emission})$$

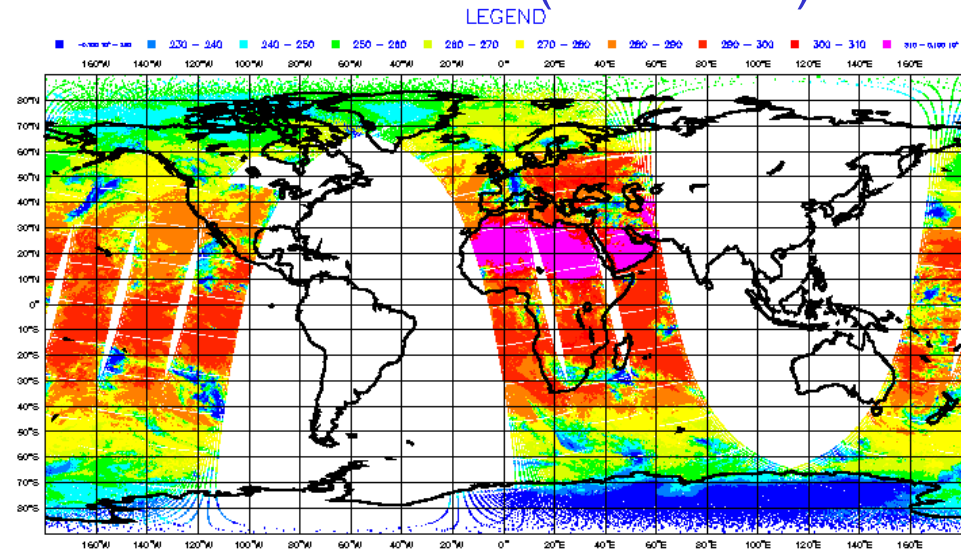
Where  $T_{\text{surf}}$  is the surface skin temperature and  $\epsilon$  the surface emissivity

These are primarily used to obtain information on the **surface temperature** and quantities that influence the **surface emissivity** such as wind (ocean) and vegetation (land). They can also be used to obtain information on **clouds/rain** and cloud movements (to provide **wind** information)

## SSM/I channel 7 (89GHz)

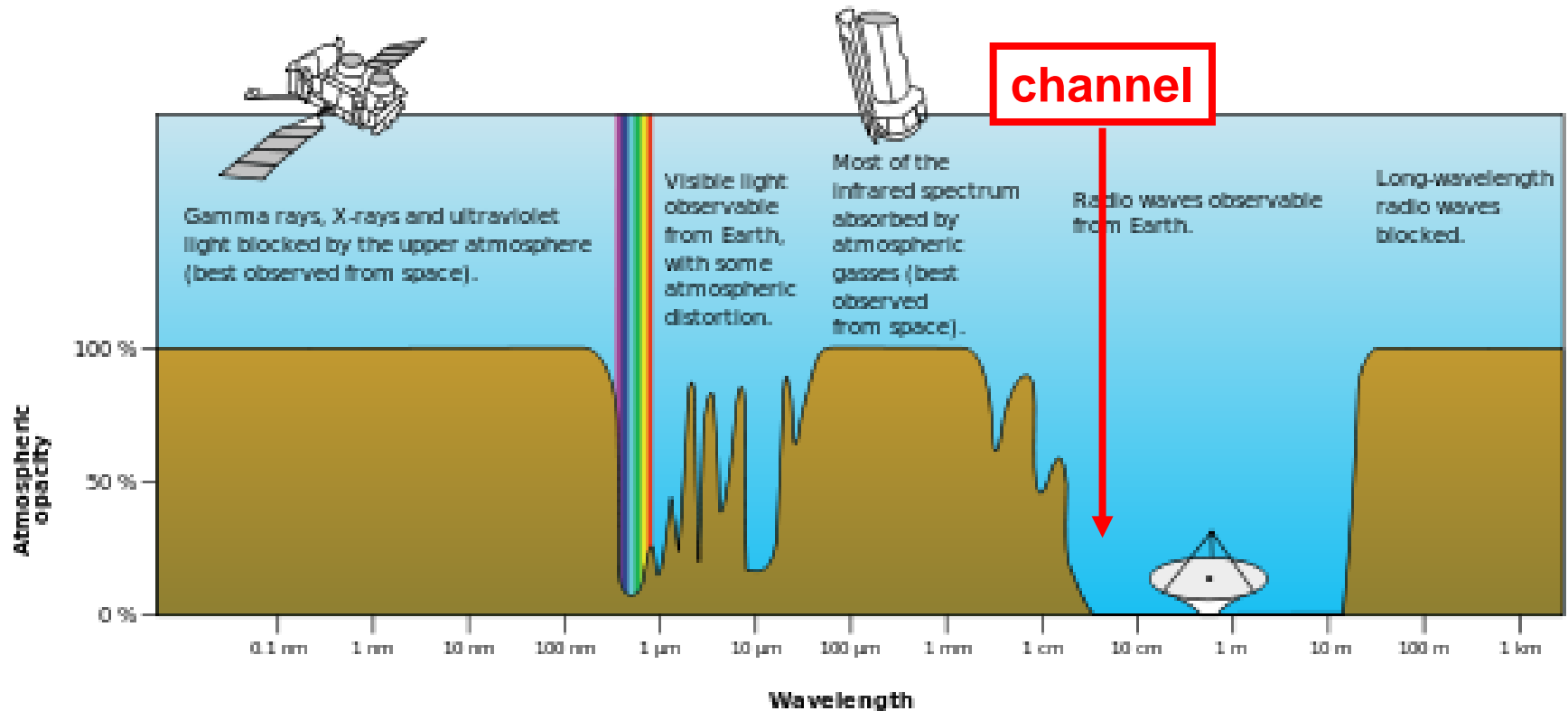


## HIRS channel 8 (11microns)



# **Surface sensing Channels (active)**

# Surface sensing Channels (active)



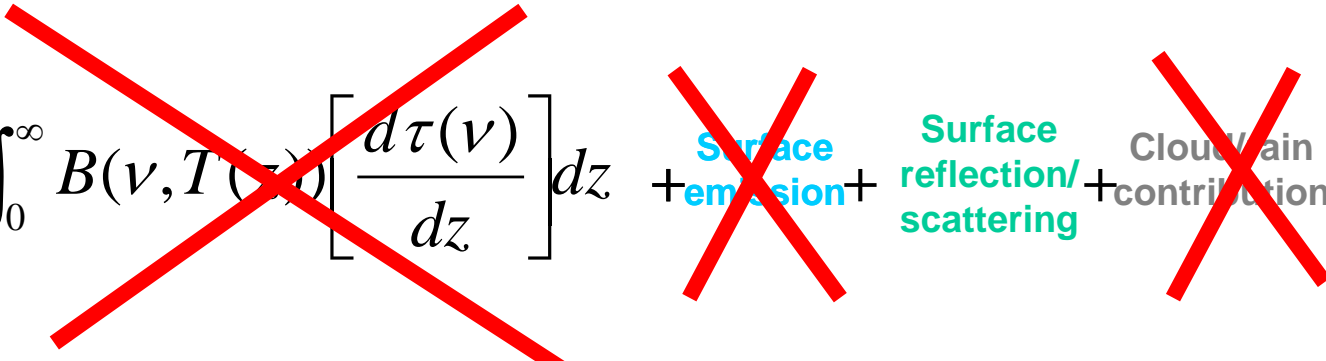
# SURFACE SENSING CHANNELS (ACTIVE)

...selecting channels where there is **no** contribution from the **atmosphere** or **emission** from the surface....

$$L(\nu) = \int_0^{\infty} B(\nu, T(z)) \left[ \frac{d\tau(\nu)}{dz} \right] dz + \text{Surface emission} + \text{Surface reflection/scattering} + \text{Cloud/rain contribution} + \dots$$

# SURFACE SENSING CHANNELS (ACTIVE)

...selecting channels where there is **no** contribution from the **atmosphere** or **emission** from the surface....

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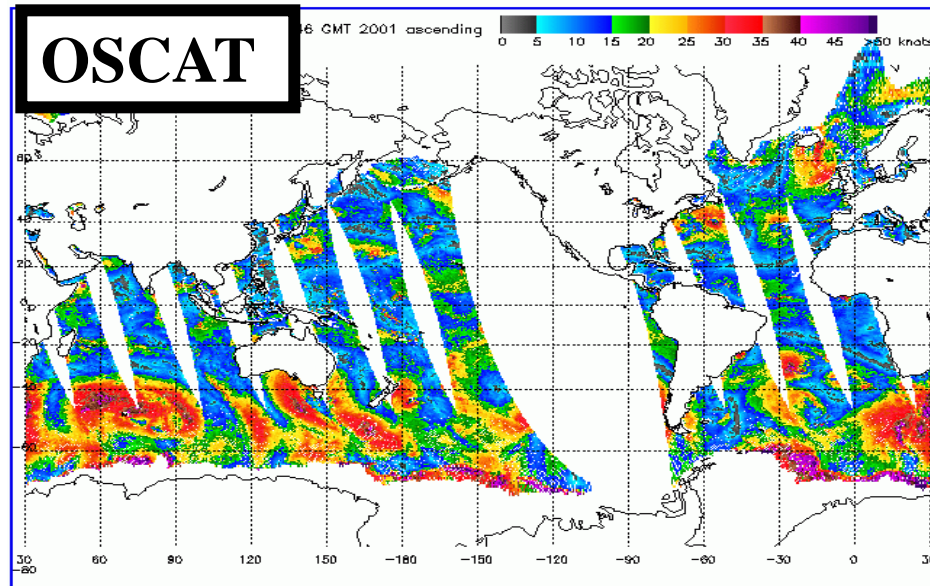


# SURFACE SENSING CHANNELS (ACTIVE)

These (e.g. scatterometers) **actively illuminate the surface** in window parts of the spectrum such that

$$L(\nu) = \text{surface scattering} [ \varepsilon(u, \nu) ]$$

These primarily provide information on **ocean winds** (via the relationship with sea-surface emissivity ) **without** the strong surface temperature ambiguity .



**What type of  
channels are most  
important for NWP  
?**

# **Atmospheric temperature sounding**

# ATMOSPHERIC TEMPERATURE SOUNDING

If radiation is selected in an **atmospheric sounding channel** for which

$$L(\nu) = \int_0^{\infty} B(\nu, T(z)) \left[ \frac{d\tau(\nu)}{dz} \right] dz$$

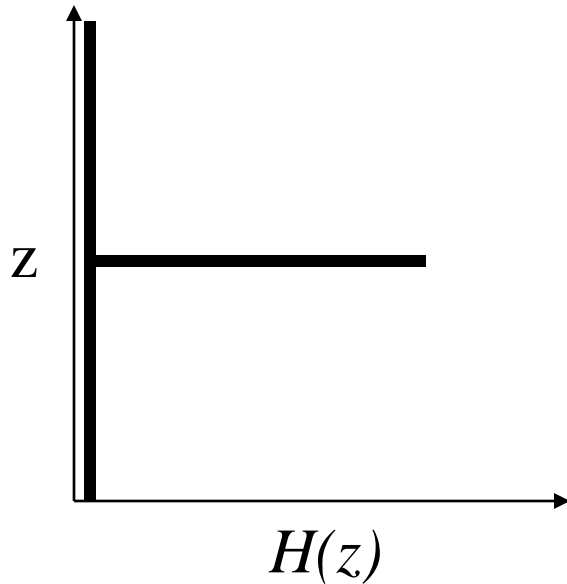
and we define a function  $H(\mathbf{z}) = \left[ \frac{d\tau}{dz} \right]$

When the primary absorber is a well mixed gas (e.g. oxygen or CO<sub>2</sub>) with known concentration it can be seen that the **measured radiance** is essentially a **weighted average of the atmospheric temperature profile**, or

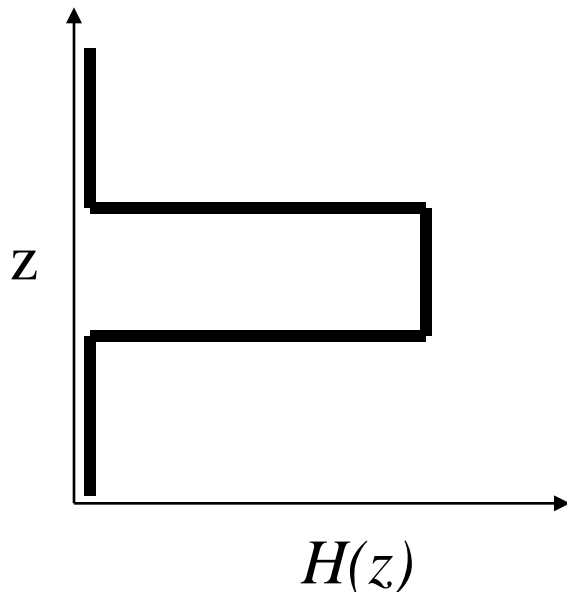
$$L(\nu) = \int_0^{\infty} B(\nu, T(z)) H(\mathbf{z}) dz$$

The function  $H(\mathbf{z})$  that defines this vertical average is known as a **WEIGHTING FUNCTION**

# IDEAL WEIGHTING FUNCTIONS

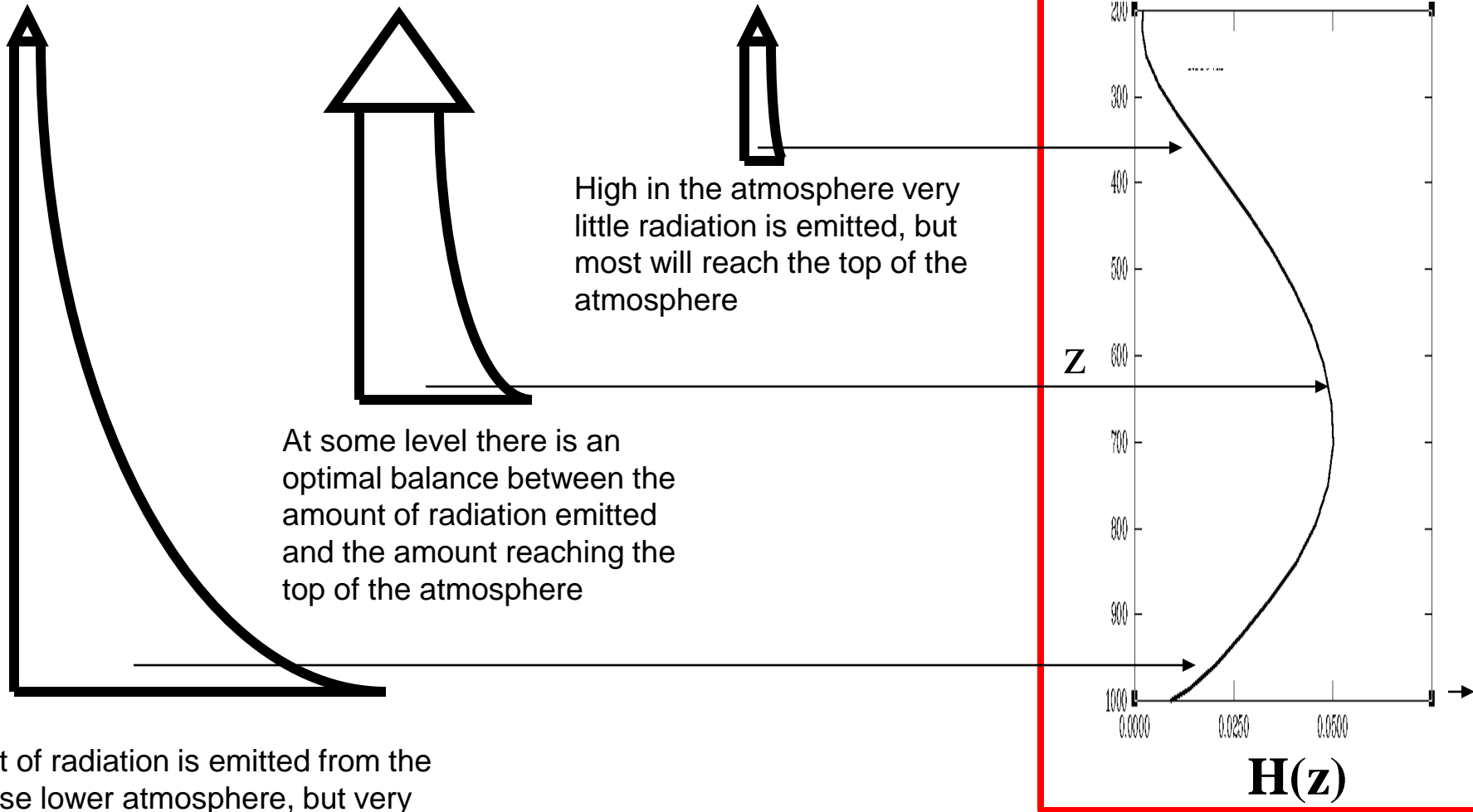


If the weighting function was a delta-function - this would mean that the measured radiance in a given channel is sensitive to the temperature at a single level in the atmosphere.



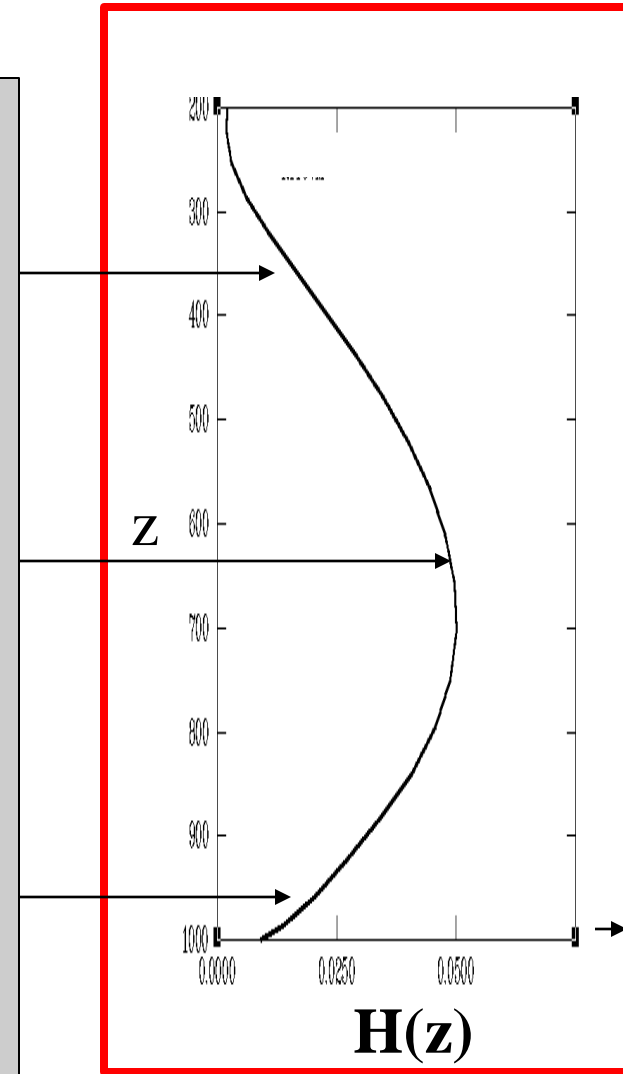
If the weighting function was a box-car function, this would mean that the measured radiance in a given channel was only sensitive to the temperature between two discrete atmospheric levels

# REAL ATMOSPHERIC WEIGHTING FUNCTIONS



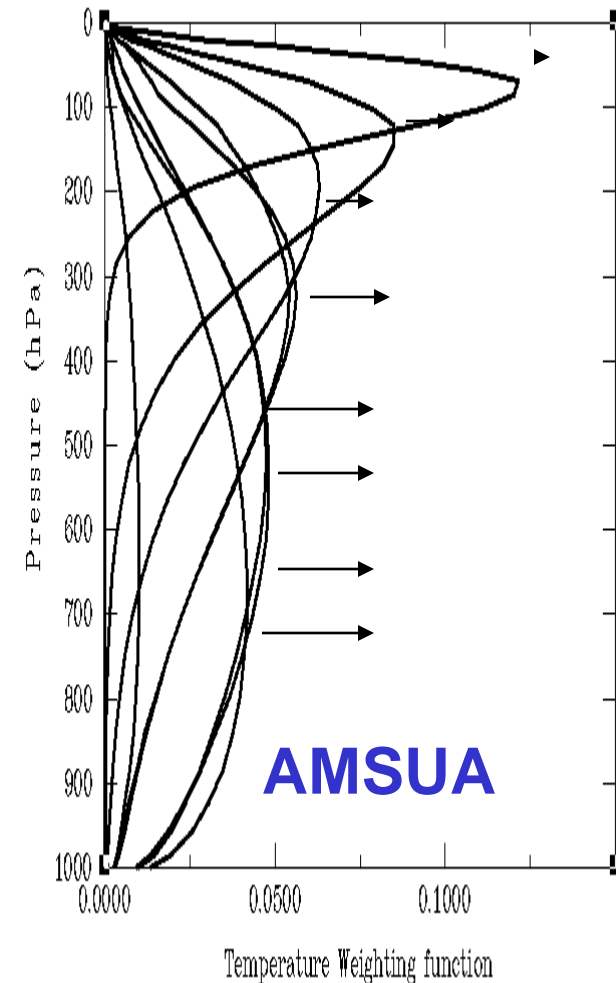
# REAL ATMOSPHERIC WEIGHTING FUNCTIONS

**Satellite sounding  
radiances are broad  
vertical averages of the  
atmospheric  
temperature structure**



# REAL WEIGHTING FUNCTIONS continued...

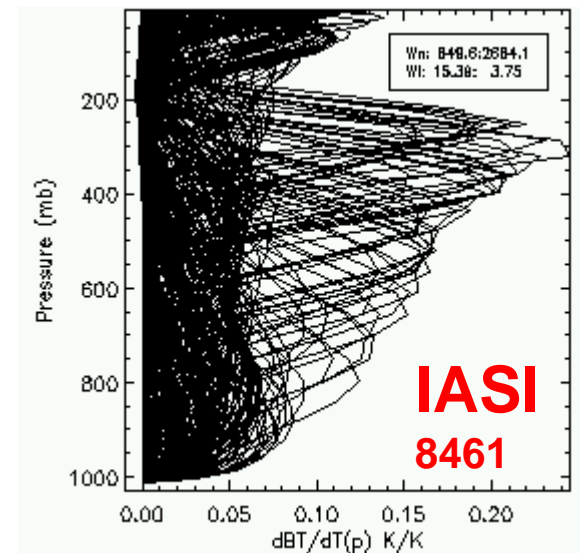
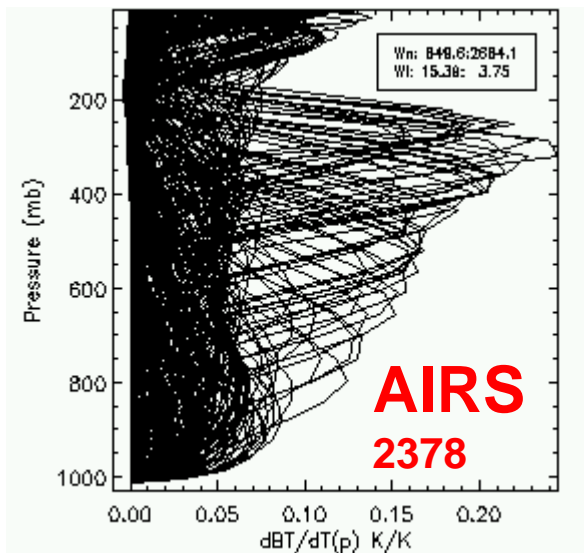
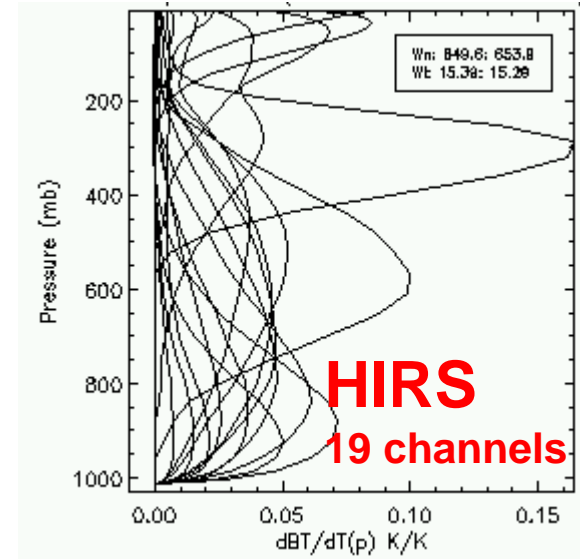
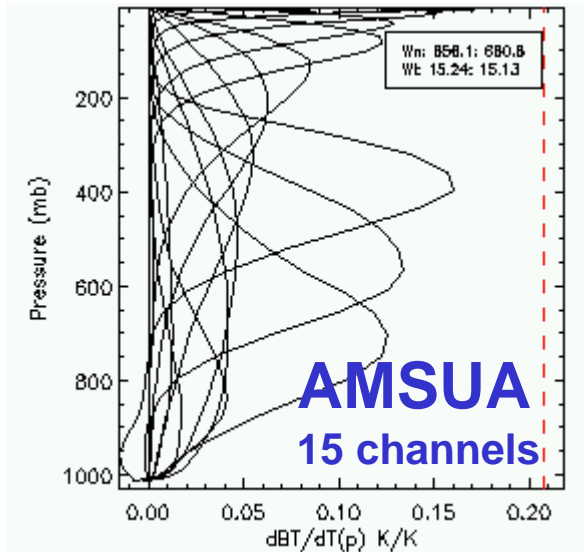
- The altitude at which the **peak** of the weighting function occurs depends on the **strength** of absorption for a given channel
- Channels in parts of the spectrum where the absorption is **strong** (e.g. near the centre of CO<sub>2</sub> or O<sub>2</sub> lines ) peak **high** in the atmosphere
- Channels in parts of the spectrum where the absorption is **weak** (e.g. in the wings of CO<sub>2</sub> O<sub>2</sub> lines) peak **low** in the atmosphere



By selecting a **number of channels** with varying absorption strengths we **sample** the atmospheric temperature at **different altitudes**



# MORE REAL WEIGHTING FUNCTIONS ...



**How do we extract atmospheric  
information (e.g. temperature)  
from satellite radiances**

**?**

***...i.e. how do we solve the inverse  
problem....***

# The Radiative Transfer (RT) equation

“Forward problem”

OBSERVATION OPERATOR

measured by the  
satellite

depends on the state of the atmosphere

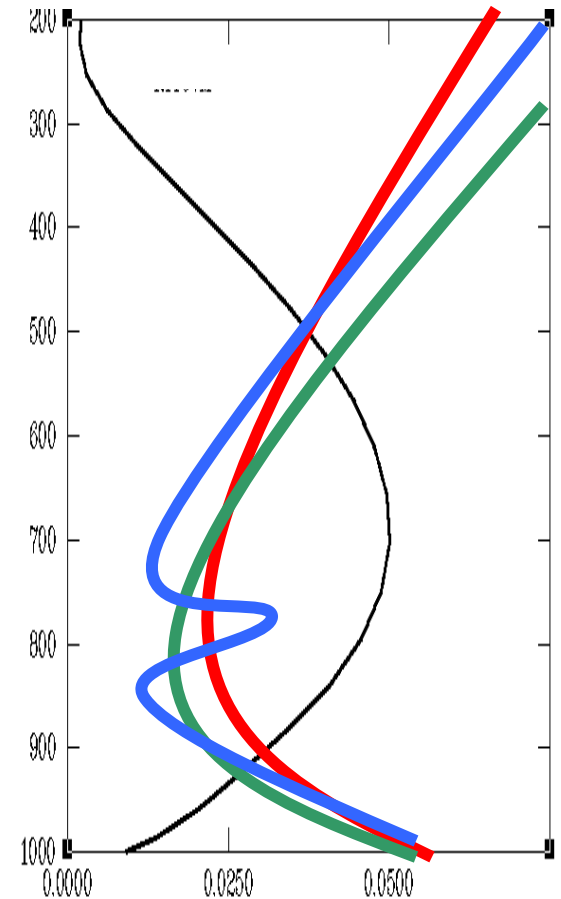
$$L(\nu) = \int_0^\infty B(\nu, T(z)) \left[ \frac{d\tau(\nu)}{dz} \right] dz + \text{Surface emission} + \text{Surface reflection/scattering} + \text{Cloud/rain contribution} + \dots$$

MINIMISATION

“Inverse problem”

# The Inverse problem

As the weighting functions are broad, if we have a finite number of channels, the inverse problem is **formally ill-posed** because an infinite number of different temperature profiles could give the same measured radiances !!!



*See paper by Rodgers 1976 Retrieval of atmospheric temperature and composition from remote measurements of thermal radiation. Rev. Geophys.Space. Phys. 14, 609-624*

**...so to solve the inverse problem  
we need to bring in additional  
information ....**

**...satellite data relies strongly on  
background information and Data  
Assimilation skill...**

**“Direct Radiance Assimilation”**

# The cost function $J(\mathbf{X})$

model state

background error covariance

$$J(x) = (x - x_b)^T \mathbf{B}^{-1} (x - x_b) + (y - H[x])^T \mathbf{R}^{-1} (y - H[x])$$

observations

observation\* error covariance

observation operator  
(maps the model state to the observation space)

# The cost function components ( $J_b$ )

$$J(x) = \boxed{(x - x_b)^T \mathbf{B}^{-1} (x - x_b)} + (y - H[x])^T \mathbf{R}^{-1} (y - H[x])$$

Fit of the solution to the background estimate of the atmospheric state weighted inversely by the background error covariance  $\mathbf{B}$



# The cost function components ( $J_0$ )

$$J(x) = (x - x_b)^T \mathbf{B}^{-1} (x - x_b) +$$

$$(y - H[x])^T \mathbf{R}^{-1} (y - H[x])$$

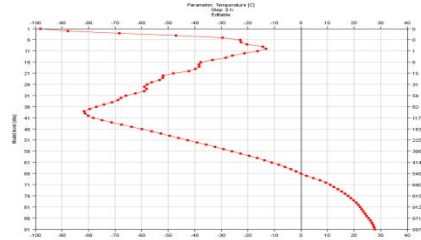
Fit of the solution to the observations weighted inversely by the measurement error covariance  $\mathbf{R}$  (observation error + error in observation operator  $\mathbf{H}$ )

# Various implementations of the assimilation algorithm

- **1D-Var**
- **3D-Var**
- **4D-Var**

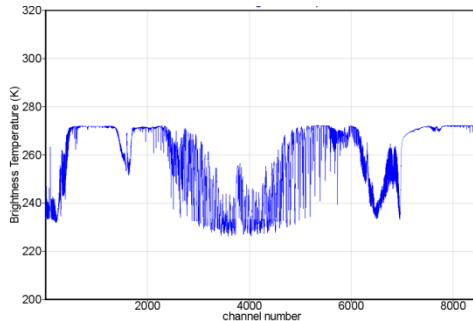
# One dimensional variational analysis (1D-Var)

1D model state profile



$$J(x) = (x - x_b)^T \mathbf{B}^{-1} (x - x_b) + (y - H[x])^T \mathbf{R}^{-1} (y - H[x])$$

vector of measured  
radiances at one location

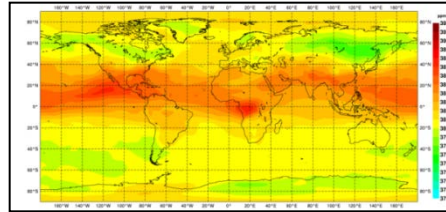


observation Operator  
= radiative transfer model

$$L(\nu) = \int_0^{\infty} B(\nu, T(z)) \left[ \frac{d\tau(\nu)}{dz} \right] dz$$

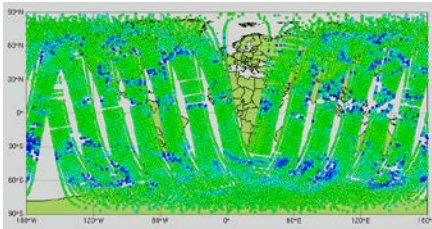
# Three dimensional variational analysis (3D-Var)

3D model state



$$J(x) = (x - x_b)^T \mathbf{B}^{-1} (x - x_b) + (y - H[x])^T \mathbf{R}^{-1} (y - H[x])$$

global vector of measured radiances

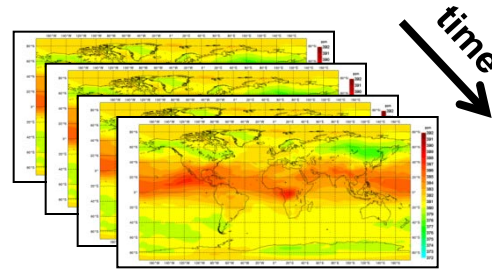


observation operator  
= spatial interpolation +  
radiative transfer model

$$L(\nu) = \int_0^\infty B(\nu, T(z)) \left[ \frac{d\tau(\nu)}{dz} \right] dz$$

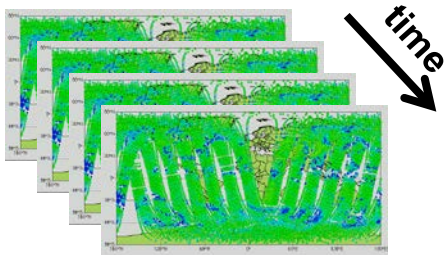
# Four dimensional variational analysis (4D-Var)

4D model state



$$J(x) = (x - x_b)^T \mathbf{B}^{-1} (x - x_b) + (y - H[x])^T \mathbf{R}^{-1} (y - H[x])$$

global time windows of measured radiances



observation operator

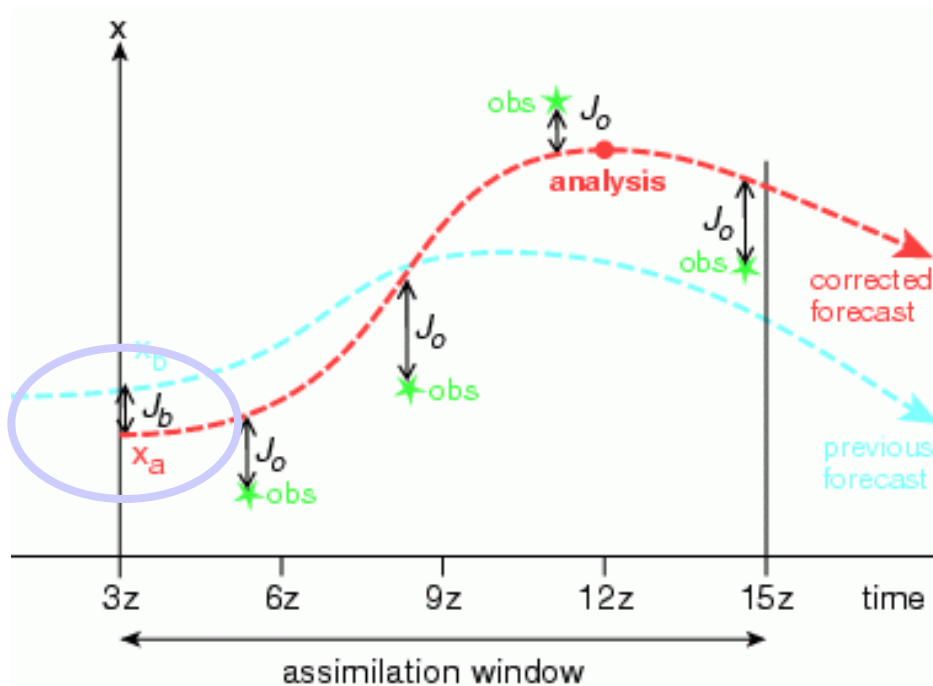
= spatial interpolation + forecast model radiative transfer model

$$L(\nu) = \int_0^\infty B(\nu, T(z)) \left[ \frac{d\tau(\nu)}{dz} \right] dz$$



# The 4D-Var Algorithm $J_b$

$$J(x) = \boxed{(x - x_b)^T \mathbf{B}^{-1} (x - x_b)} + (y - \mathbf{H}[x])^T \mathbf{R}^{-1} (y - \mathbf{H}[x])$$



# **The key elements of a satellite data assimilation system**

# Key elements of a data assimilation system

- **observation operator**
- **background errors**
- **observation errors**
- **bias correction**
- **data selection and quality control**



# Key elements of a data assimilation system

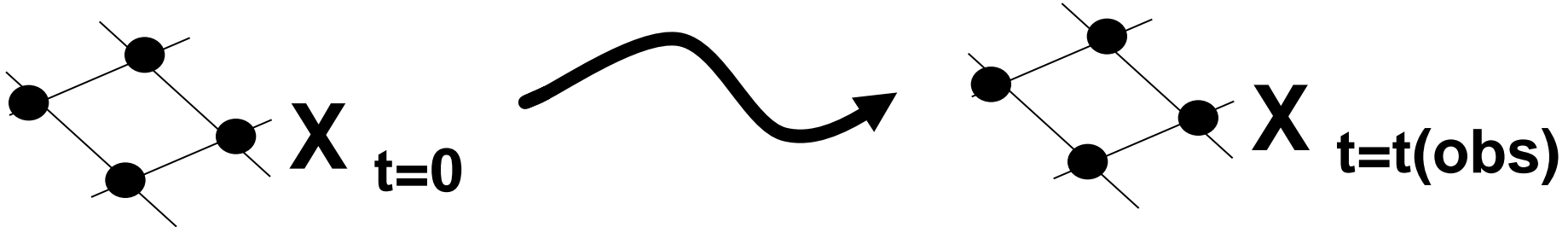
- **observation operator**
- background errors
- observation errors
- bias correction
- data selection and quality control

# Observation operator

- The observation operator must map the model state at beginning of the assimilation window ( $t=0$ ) to the observation time and location.
- In the **direct assimilation of radiance observations**, the observation operator must incorporate an additional step to compute radiances from the model state variables (radiative transfer model RTTOV).
- This means that radiance observations are significantly more computationally expensive than conventional observations (e.g. radiosonde temperature data)

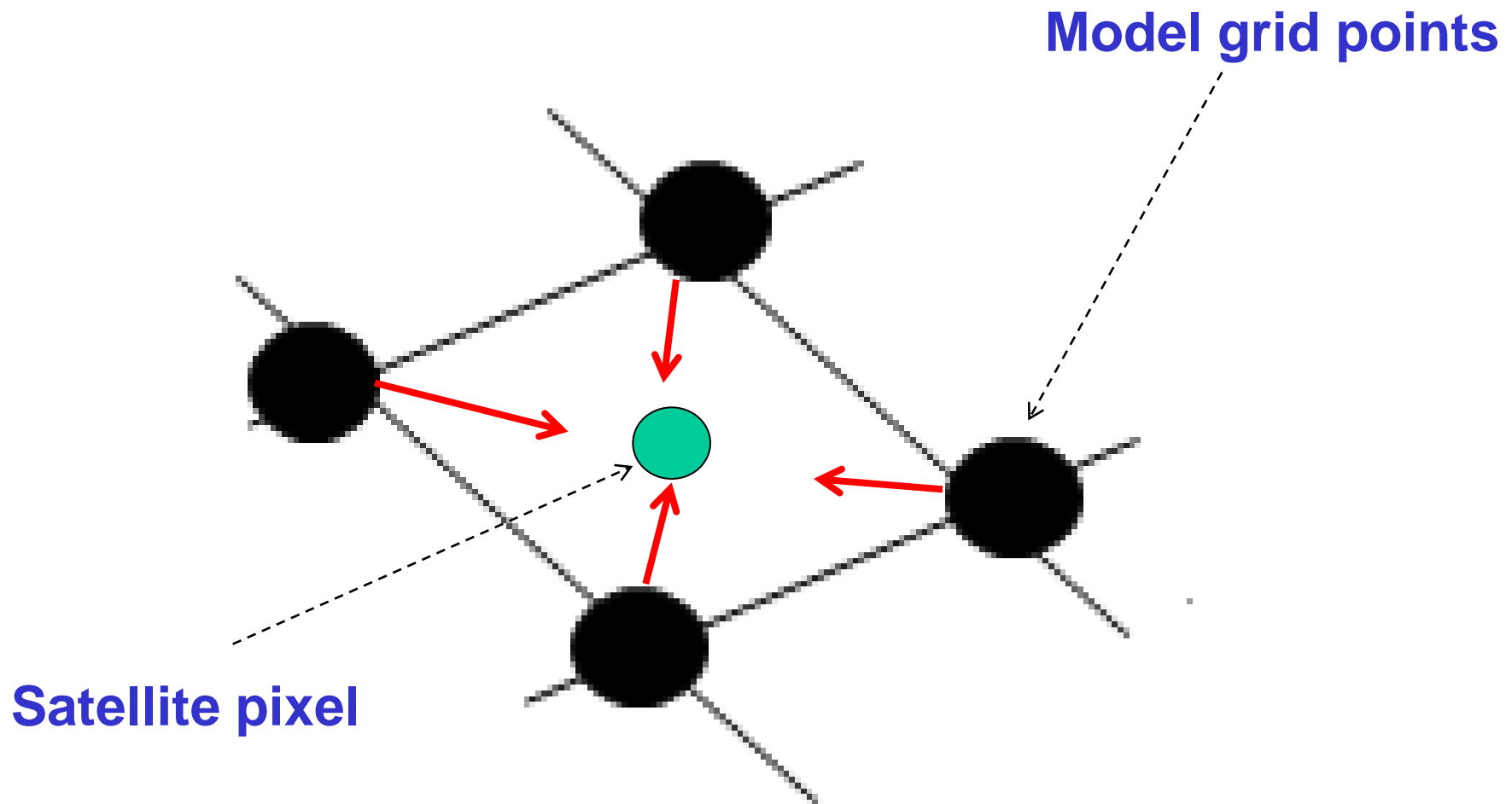
# Observation operator

1) Time evolution of forecast model field to OBS time



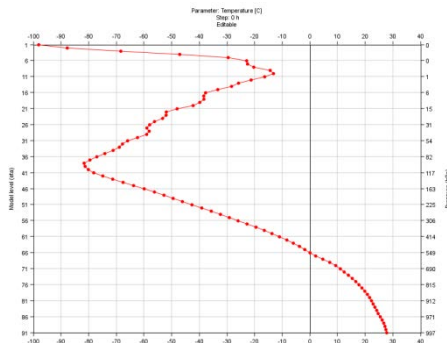
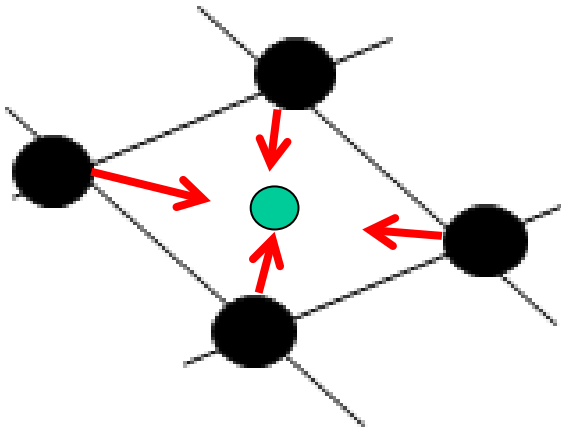
# Observation operator

## 2) Spatial interpolation of model grid to OBS location

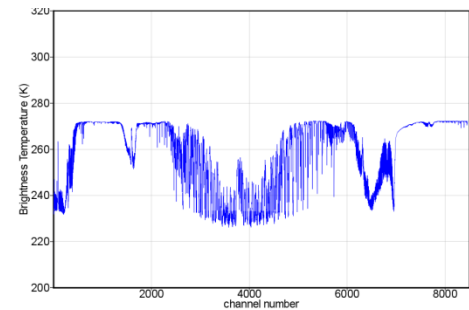
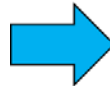


# Observation operator

3) Radiative transfer calculation from model state at that location to radiances at that location



**RTTOV**



# Observation operator (RT component)

- **The RT model should produce an accurate simulation of the satellite radiance from the model state, based upon the best knowledge of the instrument characteristics and up to date spectroscopic information.**
- **However, the model must be fast enough to process huge quantities of data in near real time (thus line-by-line models are not suitable)**
- **In addition, the adjoint and tangent linear versions of the RT model are required by the algorithm that minimises the cost function**
- **Ideally the same RT model should be used for all satellite sensors being assimilated**

# Key elements of a data assimilation system

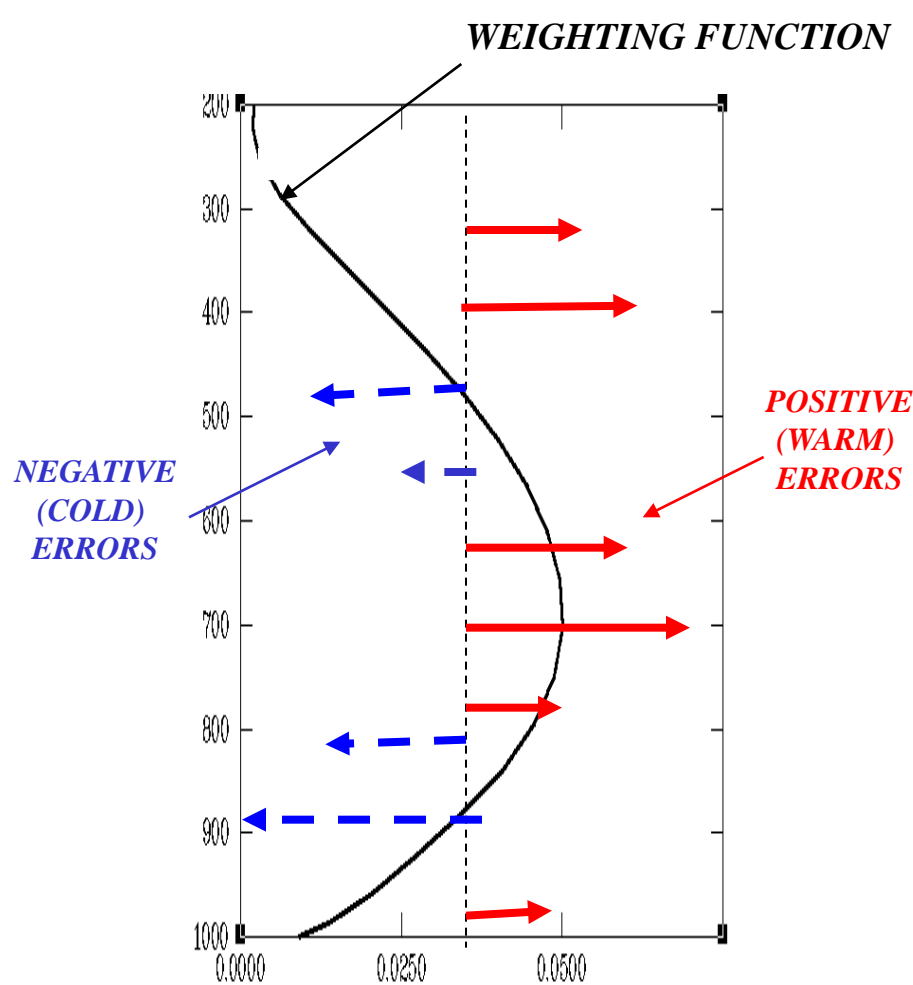
- observation operator
- **background errors**
- observation errors
- bias correction
- data selection and quality control

# Background errors (and vertical resolution)

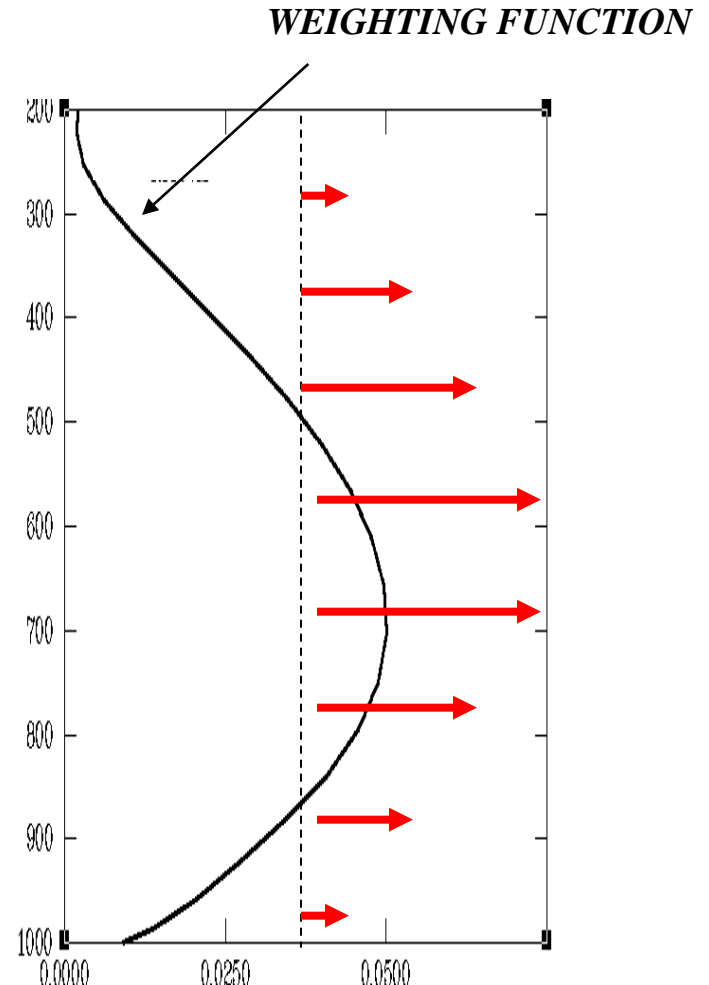
- The matrix  $B$  must accurately describe errors in the background estimate of the atmospheric state. It determines the weight given to the background information.
- A very important aspect for the assimilation of near-nadir viewing satellite radiances are the **vertical correlations** that describe how background errors are distributed in the vertical (sometimes called structure functions)
- These are important because satellite radiances have very **limited vertical resolution** (previous lecture)



# Background errors (and vertical resolution)



***“Difficult”* to correct**



***“Easy”* to correct**

# Background errors (and vertical resolution)

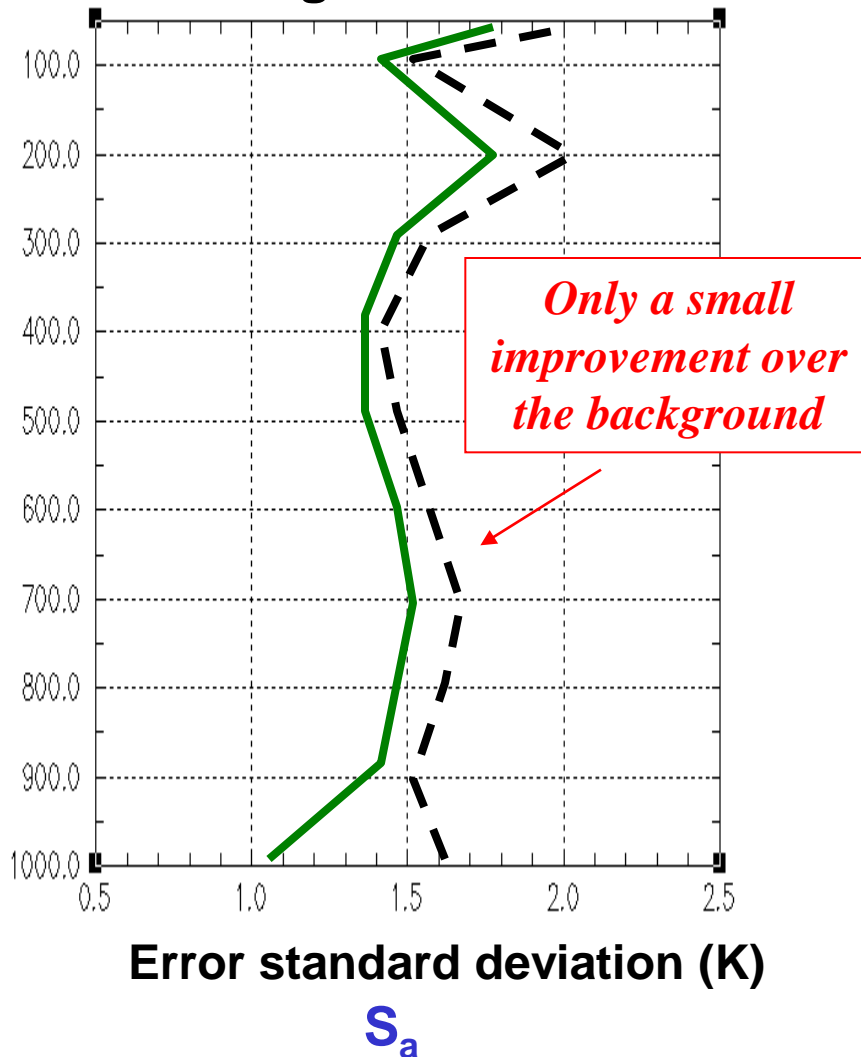
We can quantify the **improvement** of the analysis of the satellite radiances compared to the background (for a given sensor) for these two different regimes of background error:

$$\mathbf{S}_a = \mathbf{B} - \underbrace{[\mathbf{HB}]^T [\mathbf{HBH}^T + \mathbf{R}]^{-1} \mathbf{HB}}_{\text{improvement term}}$$

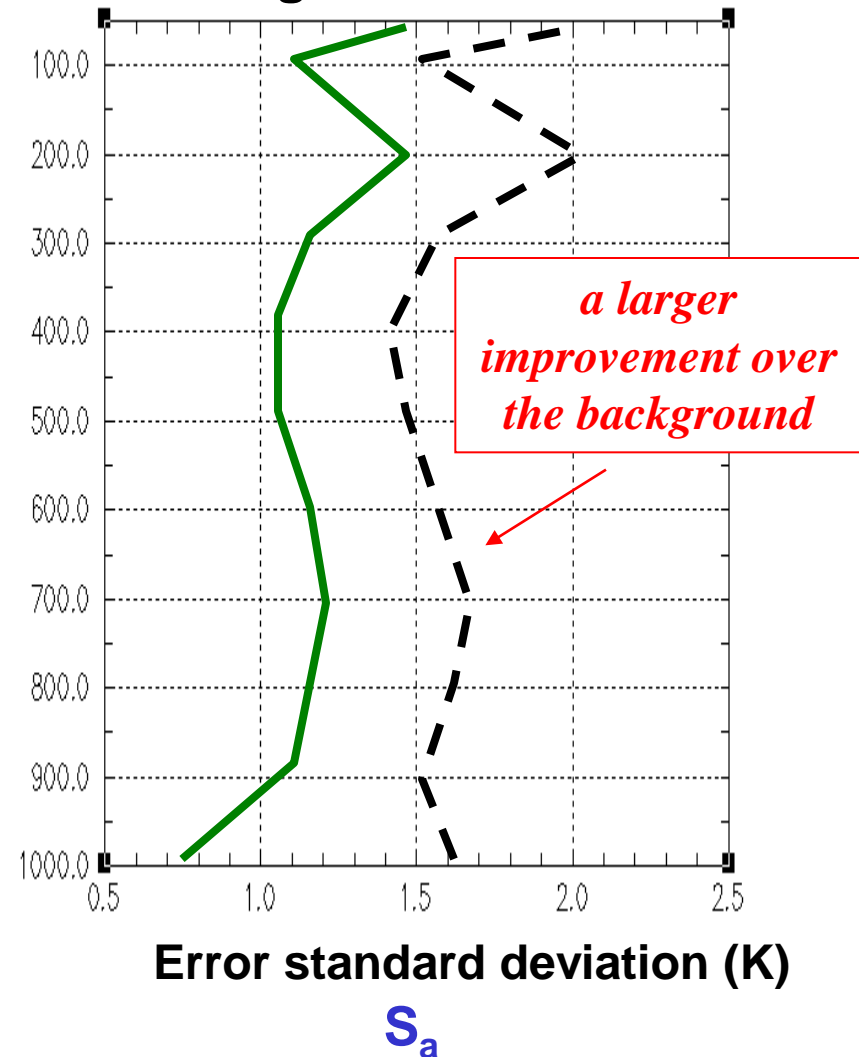
The **improvement** has been simulated for the assimilation of all 8461 channels of IASI.

# Background errors (and vertical resolution)

**Sharp** / anti-correlated background errors

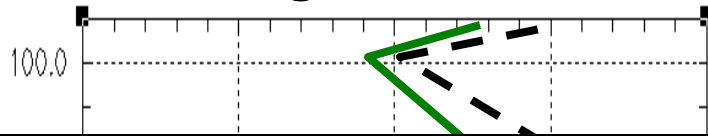


**Broad** / deep correlated background error

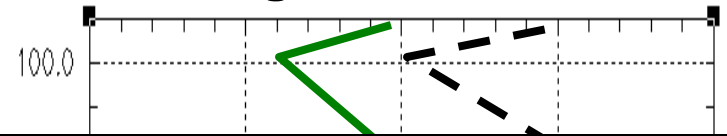


# Background errors (and vertical resolution)

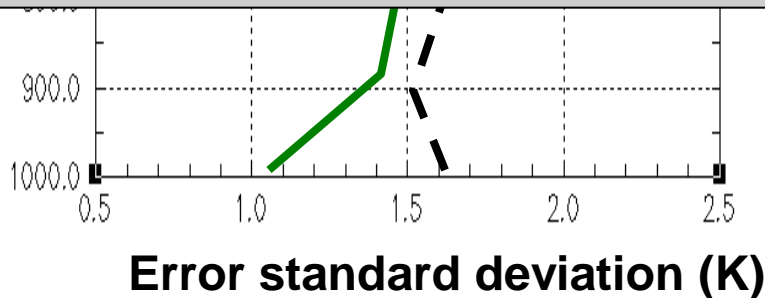
**Sharp** / anti-correlated  
background errors



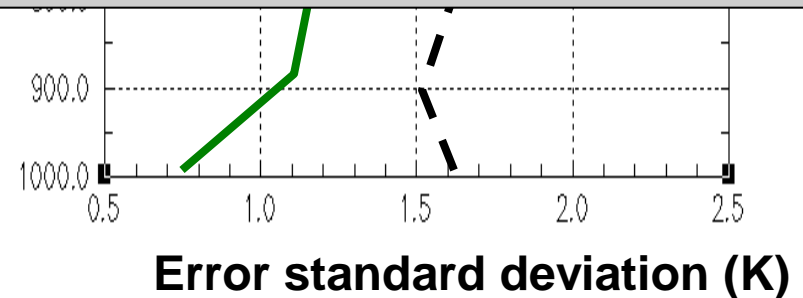
**Broad** / deep correlated  
background error



**So the same satellite can have a big impact or small impact depending on how the background errors are distributed**



$S_a$

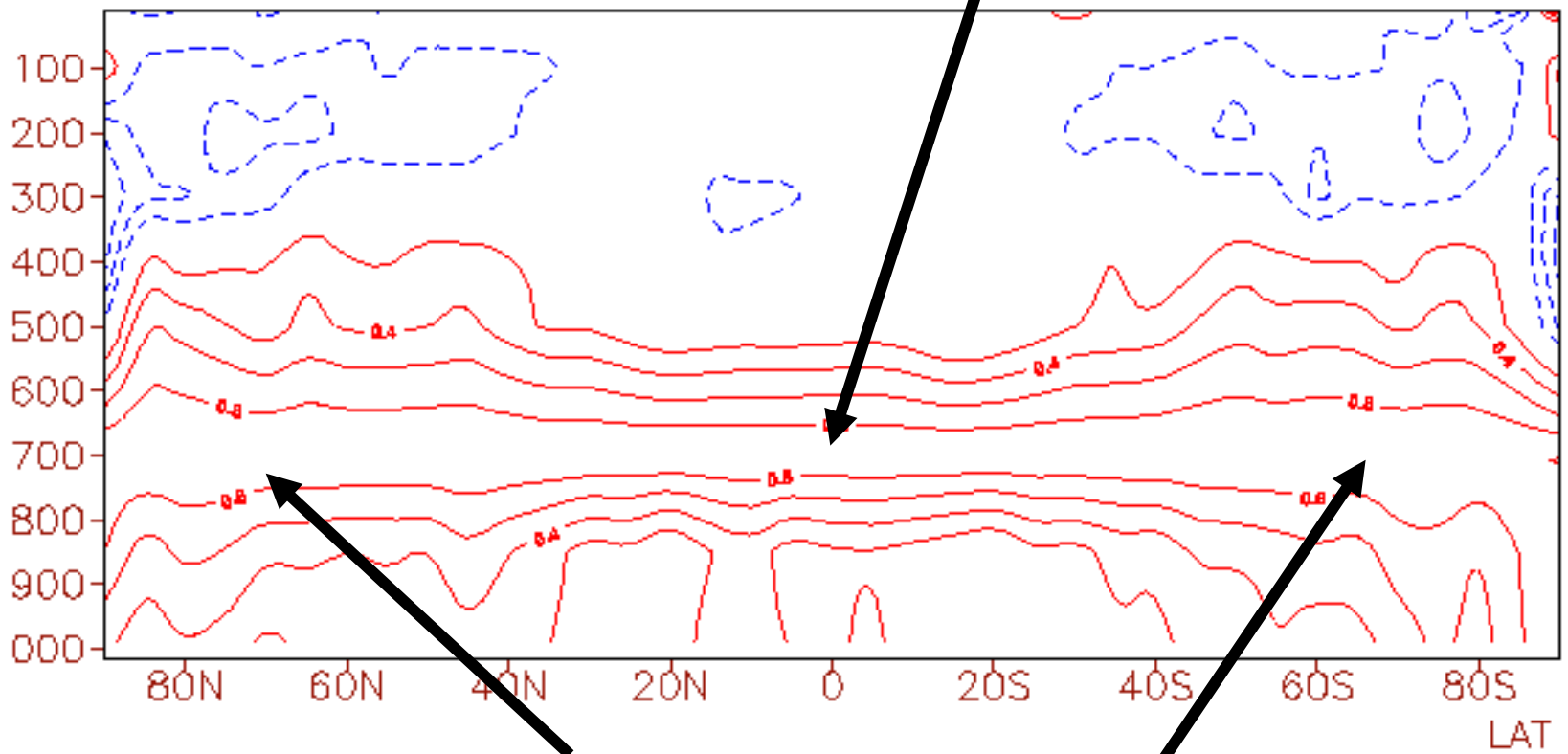


$S_a$

# Background errors (and vertical resolution)

**700hPa T error**

**Sharper error correlations  
in the Tropics**



**Broader vertical correlations  
in the mid-latitudes**

# Key elements of a data assimilation system

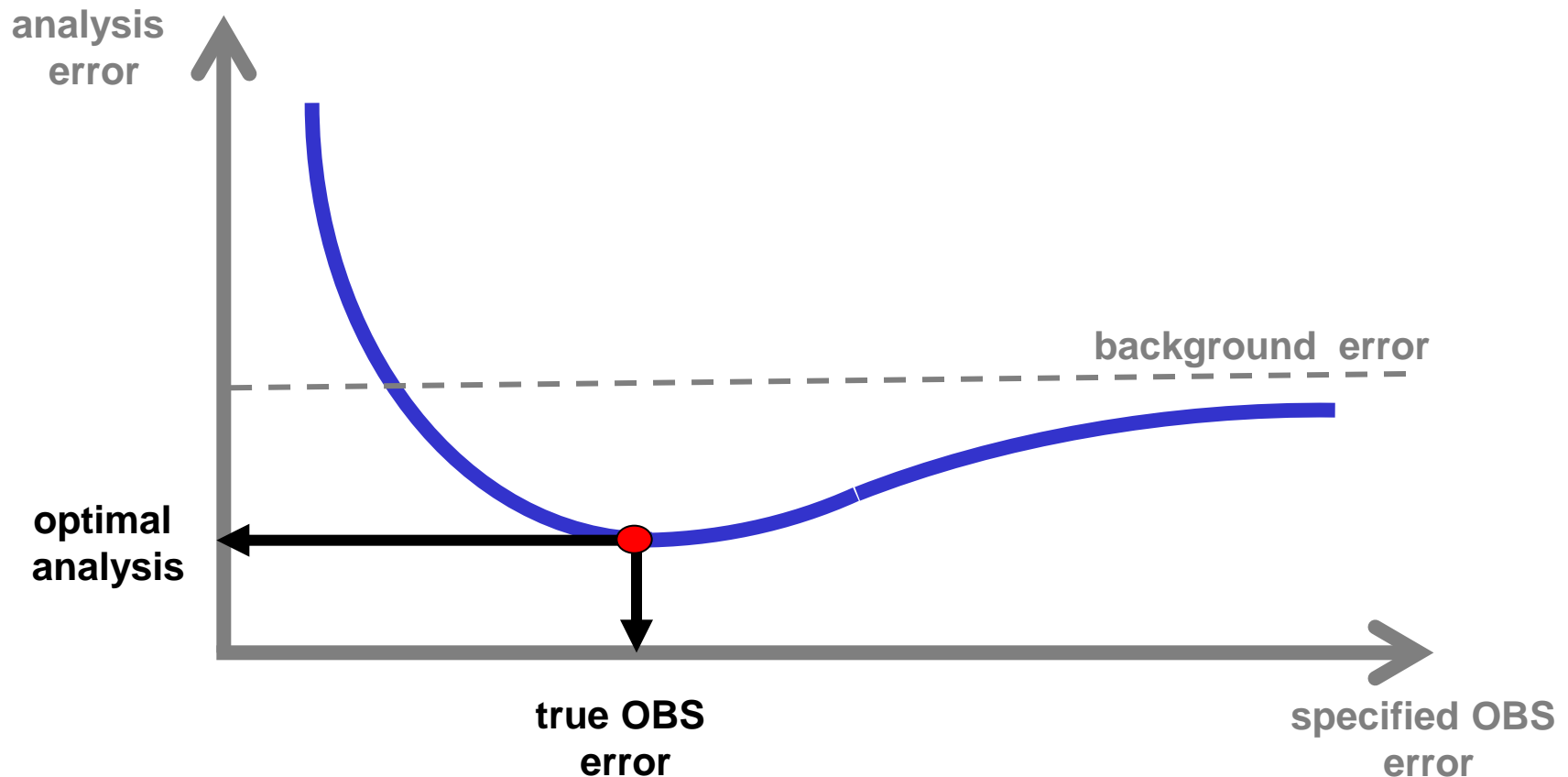
- observation operator
- background errors
- **observation errors**
- bias correction
- data selection and quality control

# Observation errors:

- These determine the weight we give to the radiance observations. The observation error must account for random uncertainties in the observation operator (e.g. RT model), errors in data screening (e.g. residual clouds) and errors of representativeness (e.g. scale mismatch).
- It is important to model both the magnitude of errors (diagonals of  $R$ ) and any inter-channel correlations
- Wrongly specified observation errors can lead to an analysis with larger errors than the background!

# Observation errors:

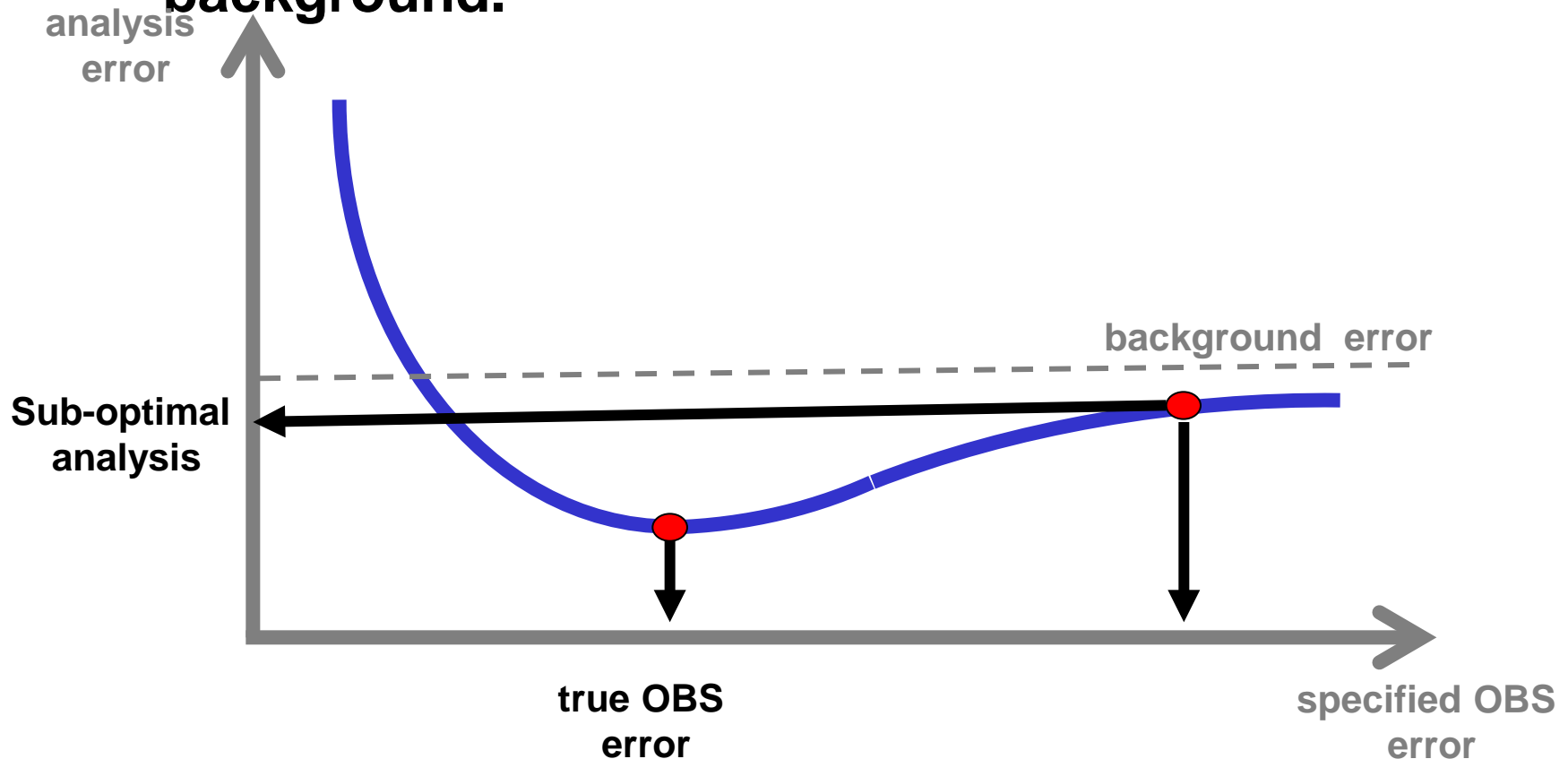
- Specifying the correct observation error produces an optimal analysis with minimum error.





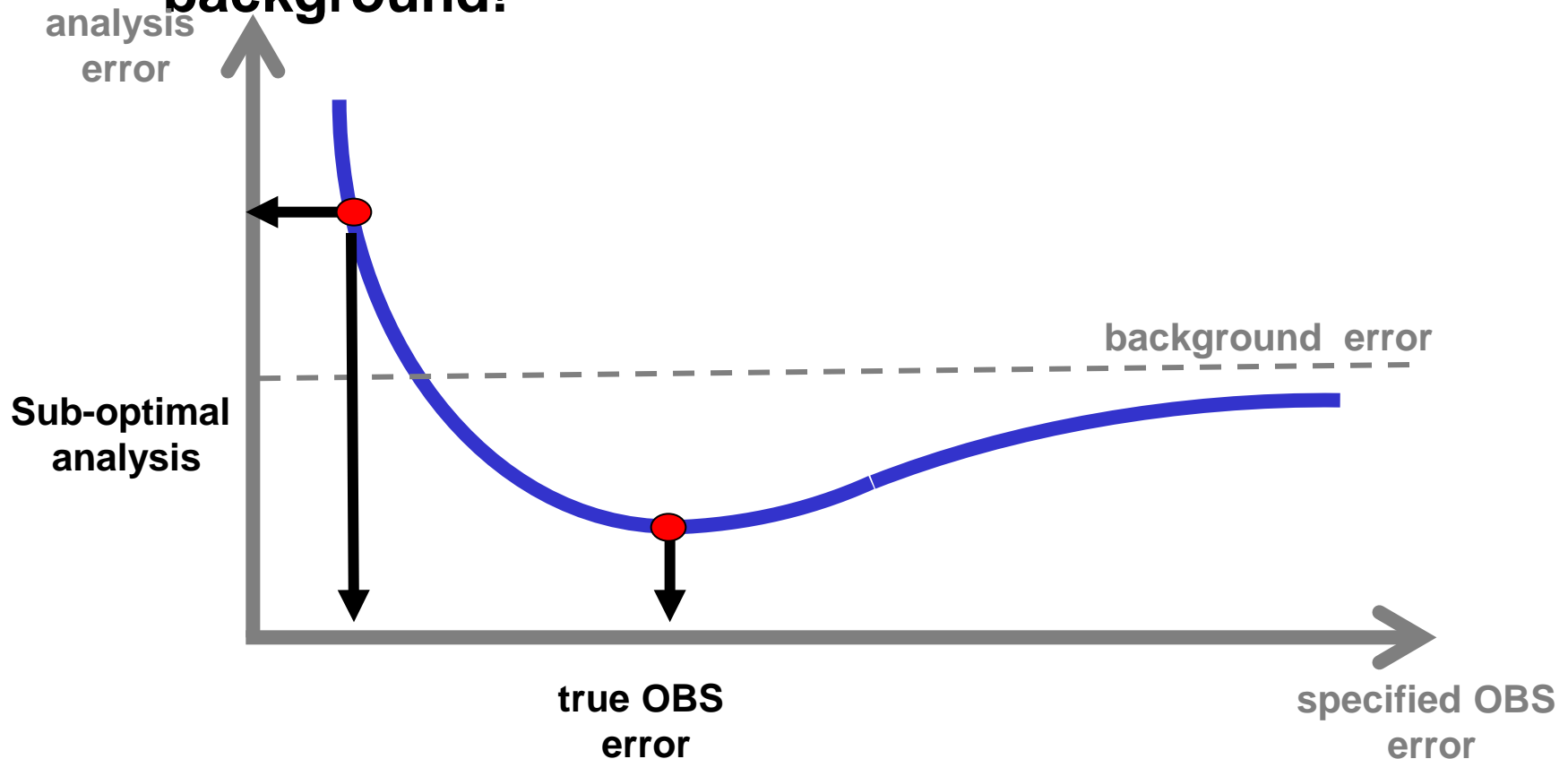
# Observation errors:

- **Over-estimating the OBS error degrades the analysis, but the result will not be worse than the background.**



# Observation errors:

- Under-estimating the OBS error degrades the analysis, and the result can be worse than the background!



# Key elements of a data assimilation system

- observation operator
- background errors
- observation errors
- **bias correction**
- data selection and quality control

# Bias correction:

Systematic errors must be removed otherwise biases will propagate in to the analysis (causing **global damage** in the case of satellites!). A bias in the radiances is defined as:

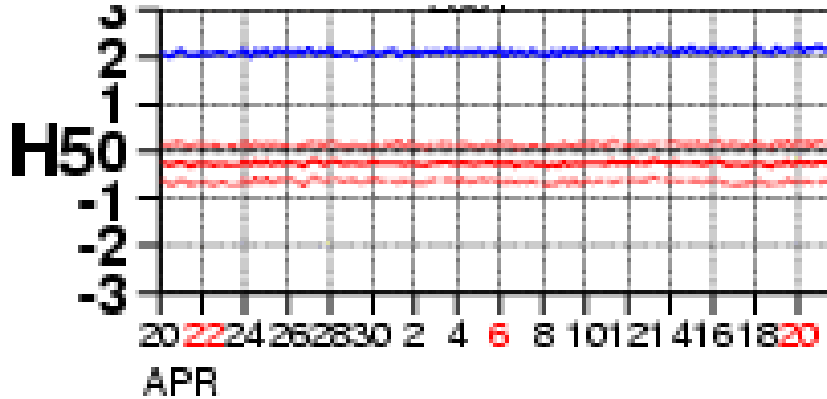
$$\textit{bias} = \textit{mean} [ Y_{\text{obs}} - H(X_{\text{true}}) ]$$

Sources of systematic error in radiance assimilation include:

- instrument error (scanning or calibration)
- radiative transfer error (spectroscopy or RT model)
- cloud / rain / aerosol screening errors

# Bias correction:

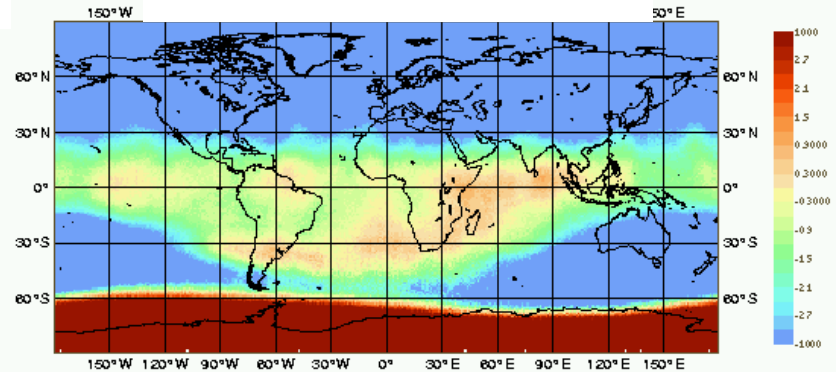
## HIRS channel 5



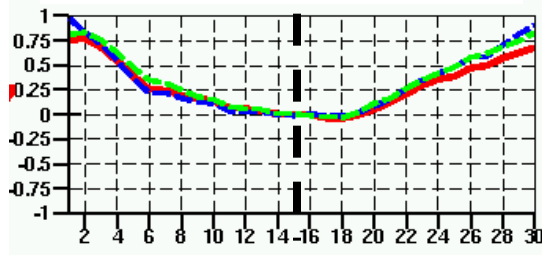
*simple flat offset biases that are constant in time*

*biases that vary depending on location or air-mass*

## AMSU-A channel 14



## AMSU-A channel 7



*biases that vary depending on the Scan position of the satellite instrument*

limb

nadir

limb

# Bias correction:

But sometimes **NWP systematic errors** can make it difficult to diagnose and correct observation biases

What we would like to quantify is:

$$\textit{Bias} = \textit{mean} [ Y_{\text{obs}} - H(X_{\text{true}}) ]$$

But in practice all we can monitor is :

$$\textit{Bias} = \textit{mean} [ Y_{\text{obs}} - H(X_{\text{b/a}}) ]$$

# Key elements of a data assimilation system

- observation operator
- background errors
- observation errors
- bias correction
- **data selection and quality control**

# Data selection and quality control (QC):

The primary purpose of this is to ensure that the observations entering the analysis are consistent with the assumptions in the observations error covariance (R) and the observation operator (H).

Primary examples include the following:

- Rejecting bad data with **gross error** (not described by R)
- Rejecting data affected by **clouds** if H is a clear sky RT
- Thinning data if no **correlation** is assumed (in R)
- Always **blacklisting** data where we do not trust our QC!



# Data selection and quality control (QC):

Often checks are performed using the forecast background as a reference. That is an observations is rejected if the departure from the background exceeds a threshold  $T_{QC}$ :

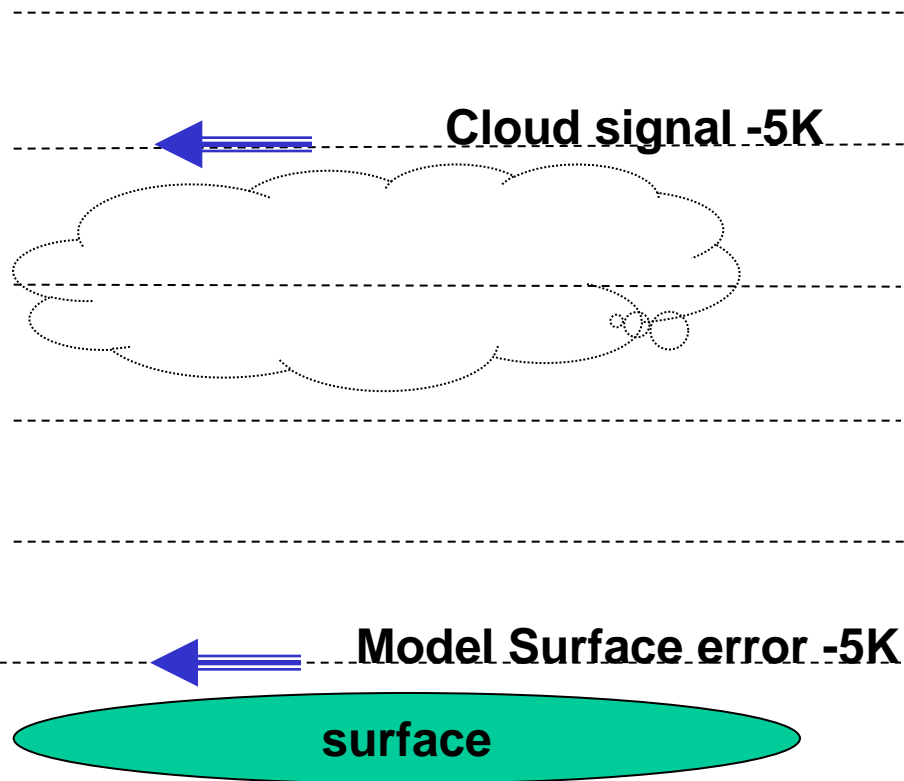
$$Y_{obs} - H(X_{true}) > T_{QC}$$

But sometimes large errors in the background can lead to:

- False rejection of a good observation
- Missed rejection of a bad observation

# Data selection and quality control:

- Missed rejection of a **bad** observation



The radiance are contaminated by cloud (**cold 5K**) compared to the clear sky value.

But our computation of the clear sky value from the background is also **cold by 5K** due to an error in the surface skin temperature.

Thus our checking (against the background) sees no reason to reject the observation and is it **passed!**

# A QUICK REVIEW OF KEY CONCEPTS

- Satellite instruments measure radiance (not T,Q or wind)
- Sounding radiances are broad vertical averages of the temperature profile (defined by the weighting functions)
- The estimation of atmospheric temperature from the radiances is ill-posed and all retrieval algorithms use some sort of prior information
- The correct specification of observation errors, background errors (vertical correlations) , bias corrections and QC are all crucial!

End

# The 4D-Var Algorithm $J_o$

$$J(x) = (x - x_b)^T \mathbf{B}^{-1} (x - x_b) +$$

$$(y - \mathbf{H}[x])^T \mathbf{R}^{-1} (y - \mathbf{H}[x])$$

