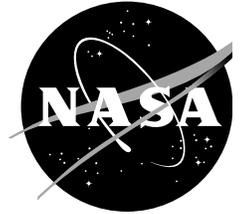


News Release

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration



Goddard Space Flight Center

Office of Public Affairs
Greenbelt, Maryland 20771
(301) 286-8955

For Release:

David E. Steitz
NASA Headquarters
202-358-1730

Dec. 6, 1999

George H. Diller
Kennedy Space Center
407-867-2468

Allen Kenitzer
Goddard Space Flight Center
301-286-2806

RELEASE NO: 99-130

NOTE TO EDITORS/NEWS DIRECTORS

TERRA SPACECRAFT/ATLAS IIAS ROCKET READY FOR LAUNCH DEC. 16

The launch of NASA's Terra spacecraft aboard a Lockheed Martin Atlas IIAS rocket is scheduled to occur on Thursday, Dec. 16 from Space Launch Complex 3 East at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. The launch window is 25 minutes in duration extending from 10:33 - 10:58 a.m. PST (1:33 - 1:58 p.m. EST).

Terra, originally called EOS AM-1, is the NASA flagship in a new series of spacecraft which represents a key contribution to the U.S. Global Change Research Program. Terra carries five state-of-the-art sets of instruments with measurement and accuracy capabilities never flown before. Terra takes a global approach to data collection that will enable scientists to study the interaction among the four spheres of the Earth system--the oceans, lands, atmosphere and biosphere.

Long-term weather and climate prediction is a challenge now requiring the collection of better data over longer periods to understand the interactions and links among air, land, water and life within the Earth system. Moreover, Terra will also be able to measure and observe changes in the Earth's radiation energy budget important to the process. This is the amount of incoming energy from the sun minus outgoing energy from reflected sunlight and

- More-

emitted heat.

ACCREDITATION

News media desiring accreditation for the launch of Terra should fax their request on news organization letterhead to:

George Diller
NASA Vandenberg Resident Office
Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.
FAX: 805/605-3380

A NASA Terra mission access badge will be issued prior to entering Vandenberg Air Force Base and will be valid for press activities scheduled for Dec. 15 -16. These include the prelaunch news conference, a launch pad tour, remote camera set- up, launch day tower roll-back photo opportunity and the launch.

For further information on launch accreditation call 321-867-2468. Beginning Monday, Dec. 13 call the NASA Terra News Center at Vandenberg Air Force Base 805-605 3051.

PRELAUNCH NEWS CONFERENCE

The prelaunch news conference will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 15 from 1 - 2 p.m PST (4 to 5 p.m. EST) in the main conference room of the NASA Vandenberg Resident Office, Building 840, Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. Participants will be:

Ghassem Asrar, Associate Administrator, Office of Earth Science
NASA Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

Ray Lugo, NASA Mission Director
Kennedy Space Center, Fla.

Tom Heter, Director, Vandenberg Launch Operations
Lockheed Martin Astronautics

Richard Ho, Terra Deputy Project Manager
Goddard Space Flight Center, Md.

Captain Joe Kurtz, USAF Launch Weather Officer, 30th Weather Squadron
Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.

Media desiring to cover the prelaunch news conference should meet at the south gate of Vandenberg Air Force Base on California State Road 246 at 12:30 p.m. and will be escorted to the NASA Vandenberg Resident Office.

LAUNCH PAD TOUR

Following the prelaunch news conference, a tour will be offered to the news media of the new Atlas II launch pad to be used for Terra, Space Launch Complex 3 East. The tour will also include other launch-related facilities to be used for Terra. Other associated launch-related facilities will also be included. Those wishing to participate will be provided transportation from Building 840 to the pad.

REMOTE CAMERAS

Media desiring to establish sound-activated remote cameras at Space Launch Complex 3 East will depart on Wednesday, Dec. 15 at 10 a.m. from the south gate of Vandenberg Air Force Base on California State Route 246.

TOWER ROLL-BACK PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

On launch day, Dec. 16, there will be a photo opportunity at the pad for media desiring to observe the mobile service tower, or gantry, being retracted from around the Atlas rocket for launch. Those wishing to participate should be at the south gate of Vandenberg Air Force Base on California State Road 246 at 7:15 a.m.

LAUNCH DAY PRESS COVERAGE

Media covering the launch should be at the main gate visitor center parking lot located on California State Road 1 at 9 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 16, to be escorted to the press site located on north Vandenberg Air Force Base. A Terra press badge will be required of all media at the press site. After launch, media will be escorted back to the main gate. A post-launch news conference will not be held.

NASA TELEVISION AND VOICE CIRCUIT COVERAGE

NASA Television will carry the prelaunch news conference starting at 1 p.m. PST on Wednesday, Dec. 15. On launch day, Dec. 16, NASA TV coverage of the countdown will begin at 8:30 a.m. PST (11:30 A.M. EST) and continue through spacecraft separation which occurs at 13 minutes 39 seconds into flight.

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NASA Television is carried on GE-2, transponder 9C located at 85 degrees West longitude. Audio only will be available on the "V" circuits which may be reached by dialing 407/867-1220, 1240, 1260, 7135, 4003, 4920.

TERRA WEBCAST

A webcast of the Terra launch will be available on the NASA-KSC Home Page. The web site address is www.ksc.nasa.gov. Choose "KSC Live Video Feeds" followed by "NASA TV coverage."

NASA TERRA NEWS CENTER

The Terra News Center at the NASA Vandenberg Resident Office will be staffed beginning Monday, Dec. 13 and may be reached at 805-605-3051. A recorded launch status report will also be available starting at that time by dialing 805-734-2693.

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