NEWS

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20546

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PROJECT: BARIUM CLOUD LAUNCH

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GERMAN-U.S. CLOUD EXPERIMENT

The German Federal Ministry for Scientific Research (BMBW) and the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration are cooperating in an experiment aimed at ejecting into space a chemical which will produce a glowing, barium ion cloud about 20,000 miles above the Earth.

If successfully launched the cloud will be visible to the naked eye for 15 to 20 minutes after release of the barium as a first-magnitude or bright star over most of the Western Hemisphere the night of April 20.

A Scout rocket furnished by NASA is scheduled to lift off from Wallops Island, VA, between 7 and 9 p.m. EST and about three and one-half hours later the barium payload will be ejected 20,000 miles above Central America (7°N - 75°W) to form a very thin or widely-dispersed ionized cloud about 10,000 miles (17,000 kilometers) long which can only be detected by sensitive ground and airborne instruments.

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