



Aliens On Earth.com

Resources for those who are stranded here



[UFOs](#) | [Paranormal](#) | [Area 51](#)
[People](#) | [Places](#) | [Random](#)
[Top 100](#) | [What's New](#)
[Catalog](#) | [New Books](#)

Search... for keyword(s)

in Page Titles

Our Bookstore
is [OPEN](#)

[Mothership](#) -> [UFO](#) -> [Updates](#) -> [1998](#) -> [Feb](#) -> Here

UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Rocket Stirs Ruckus in Puerto Rico

From: RSchatte@aol.com {Rebecca Keith}
Date: Sat, 21 Feb 1998 19:14:02 EST
Fwd Date: Sun, 22 Feb 1998 03:51:35 -0500
Subject: Re: Rocket Stirs Ruckus in Puerto Rico

From: AOLNews@aol.com
Subject: Rocket Stirs Ruckus in Puerto Rico
Date: Fri, 20 Feb 1998 03:48:33 EST

Rocket Stirs Ruckus in Puerto Rico

.c The Associated Press

By JAMES ANDERSON

TORTUGUERO, Puerto Rico (AP) - A small NASA project to study the ionosphere above Puerto Rico has become a big public relations mission for scientists trying to convince skeptical islanders that there is no danger.

Hundreds of people have protested the mission to launch 11 rockets, most filled with chemicals. Two U.S. lawmakers asked NASA to postpone the project, and a local senator even introduced a bill to outlaw toying with the atmosphere above the Caribbean island.

Protesters shouting ``NASA, go home!'' tried to block access to the Tortuguero launch pad Monday night before police stepped in. Demonstrators pounded on a car leaving the launch pad, spitting on its windows. Others vowed to paddle kayaks into a coastal safety zone near the launch site.

Scientists from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, private universities and the Goddard Space Flight Center say they've spent as much time trying to ease fears as they have on science.

``If you get one or two science (questions) here you're doing well,'' said Miguel Larsen, a Clemson University physicist who is supervising the first launches from the small pad 30 miles west of San Juan.

Set to run into April, the Coqui II project will study turbulence in the ionosphere that can interfere with satellite communications and even produce wrong Global Positioning System readings.

Rockets launched from Tortuguero will release the chemical trimethylaluminum inside a thin, electrified layer of the ionosphere about 60 miles above the Earth's surface.

The chemicals will slowly burn, creating a luminous cloud in the night sky. The nearby Arecibo Observatory will train its radar on the cloud to pick up its chemical properties and track its movements, Larsen said.

The 40-foot rockets are supposed to splash down in the Atlantic Ocean at least 60 miles off the coast. That hasn't appeased activists who say NASA flouted local law by failing to prepare an environmental impact statement.

The launch pad, they note, is surrounded by Tortuguero Lagoon, a nature sanctuary itself surrounded by the town of Vega Baja, population 60,000.

They fear contamination from lead packed into each rocket - or worse, a misfire that could ignite the trimethylaluminum.

NASA scientists say hundreds of similar launches have gone off without a hitch - including a 1992 Puerto Rico mission dubbed Coqui, after an indigenous tree frog. Since Coqui II differs little from Coqui I, a new environmental impact study isn't necessary, they say.

The rockets, they add, have a 97 percent success rate.

``The 3 percent (failure rate) is too much, too risky in such a crowded area,' said Jose Escoda, a member of the Committee Against Environmental Experiments, a coalition of environmental and activist groups.

On Thursday, U.S. District Judge Jose Fuste denied their request for a temporary injunction.

Two members of the House of Representatives with strong Puerto Rico ties, Democrats Luis Gutierrez of Illinois and Nydia Velazquez of New York, urged NASA administrator Daniel Goldin to postpone the launches.

In Puerto Rico, Senator Ruben Barrios proposed legislation to ``prohibit experiments that alter the electrical and magnetic properties of the ionosphere.' The island's bar association, meanwhile, suggested the agency take its launches elsewhere.

Scientists say Puerto Rico, with its Arecibo Observatory, is ideal for studying the atmospheric phenomenon and have appeared on talk shows and visited schools to plead their case.

``This is very unusual,' Larsen said of the protests.

AP-NY-02-20-98 0345EST

Copyright 1997 The Associated Press. The information contained in the AP news report may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or otherwise distributed without prior written authority of The Associated Press.

Search for other documents to/from: [rschatte](#) | [aolnews](#)

[[Next Message](#) | [This Day's Messages](#)]
[[This Month's Index](#) | [UFO UpDates Main Index](#) | [MUFON Ontario](#)]

UFO UpDates - Toronto - updates@globalserve.net
Operated by Errol Bruce-Knapp - ++ 416-696-0304

A Hand-Operated E-Mail Subscription Service for the Study of UFO Related Phenomena.
To subscribe please send your first and last name to updates@globalserve.net
Message submissions should be sent to the same address.

[[UFO Topics](#) | [People](#) | [Ufomind What's New](#) | [Ufomind Top Level](#)]

To find this message again in the future...
Link it to the appropriate [Ufologist](#) or [UFO Topic](#) page.

Archived as a public service by [Area 51 Research Center](#) which is not responsible for content.

Software by Glenn Campbell. Technical contact: webmaster@ufomind.com

Financial support for this web server is provided by the [Research Center Catalog](#).