

NASA spacecraft will aim straight for sun next year

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A NASA spacecraft will aim straight for the sun next year and bear the name of the astrophysicist who predicted the existence of the solar wind nearly 60 years ago.

The space agency announced Wednesday that the red-hot mission would be named after Eugene Parker, professor emeritus at the University of Chicago. It's the first NASA spacecraft to be named after a researcher who is still alive, noted the agency's science mission chief, Thomas Zurbuchen.

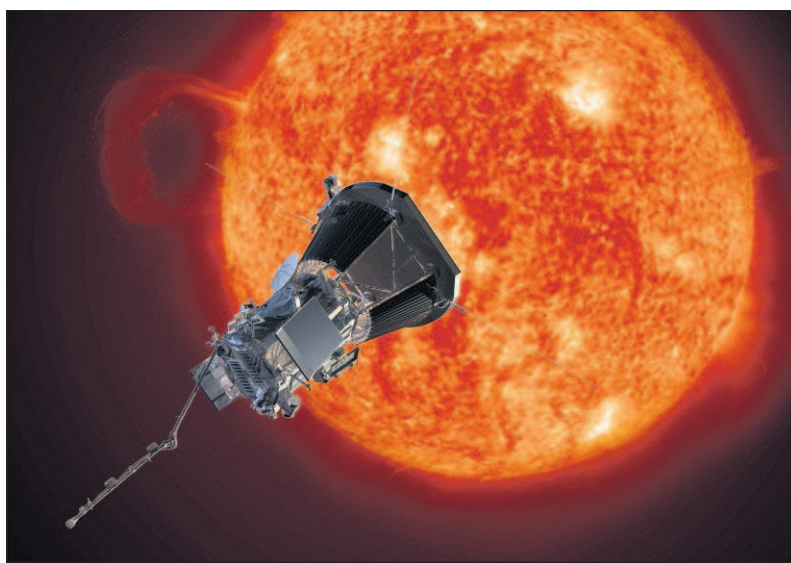
Scheduled to launch next summer from Cape Canaveral, the Parker Solar Probe will fly within 4 million miles of the sun's surface — right into the solar atmosphere. That will be considerably closer than any other spacecraft, and subject the probe to brutal heat and radiation like no other man-made structure before. The materials weren't available until now to undertake such a grueling mission.

The purpose is to study the sun's outer atmosphere and better understand how stars like ours work.

NASA spacecraft have traveled inside the orbit of Mercury, the innermost planet.

"But until you actually go there and touch the sun, you really can't answer these questions," like why is the corona — the outer plasma-loaded atmosphere — hotter than the actual surface of the sun, said mission project scientist Nicola Fox of Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory.

Parker Solar Probe will venture seven times closer than any previous spacecraft, Fox said.



Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory via AP
This image made available by the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory on Wednesday depicts NASA's Solar Probe Plus spacecraft approaching the sun.

likely consequences of a U.S. withdrawal. Trump himself kept everyone in suspense, saying he was still listening to "a lot of people both ways."

The White House signaled that Trump was likely to decide on exiting the global pact — fulfilling one of his principal campaign pledges — though top aides were divided. And the final decision may not be entirely clear-cut: Aides were still deliberating on "caveats in the language," one official said.

Abandoning the pact would isolate the U.S. from a raft of international allies who spent years negotiating the 2015 agreement to fight global warming and pollution by reducing carbon emissions in nearly 200 nations. While traveling abroad last week, Trump was repeatedly pressed to stay in the deal by European leaders and the Vatican. Withdrawing would leave the United States aligned only with Russia among the world's industrialized economies.

National Security Agency, the FBI and the CIA — for information about requests that government officials made to "unmask" the identities of U.S. individuals named in classified intelligence reports, according to a congressional aide.

The subpoenas were announced as the special counsel overseeing the government's investigation into possible Trump campaign ties to Russia has approved former FBI Director James Comey to testify before the Senate intelligence committee, according to a Comey associate.

At a Wednesday briefing, press secretary Sean Spicer said inquiries about the Russia investigation must be directed to Marc Kasowitz, another of Trump's personal attorneys. It marked the first time the White House had officially acknowledged that outside counsel had been retained. Calls and emails to Kasowitz's New York firm were not immediately returned Wednesday.

Lawmakers are likely to ask Comey about his interactions with Trump as the bureau pursued its investigation into his campaign.

Tweet that: #covfefe signals return of @realDonaldTrump

WASHINGTON (AP) — Covfefe (cuv-fey-fey) noun: A sure sign that President Donald Trump has regained control of his Twitter account.

For more than a week, the tweets from @realDonaldTrump were, well, boring.

Throughout his first big foreign trip last week, Trump's tweets had the vibe of a garden-variety politician: statements of solidarity with world leaders, retweets of his wife's visits with students and sick children, video clips from arrival statements and formal ceremonies, photos of official dinners.

Well, Twitterverse, he's back.

Starting with a wee-hours tweet that contained the mystifying nonword "covfefe," Trump on Wednesday unleashed a string of tweets that showed the president was holding nothing back, on matters both trivial and consequential.

He lashed out at the government's Russia investigation as a "Witch Hunt!"

He scolded celebrity Kathy Griffin for a video that showed what looked like Trump's severed head: "My children, especially my 11-year-old son, Barron, are having a hard time with this. Sick!"

He stoked suspense about whether he'll pull the U.S. out of an international climate change agreement: "I will be announcing my decision on the Paris Accord over the next few days. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"

But the internet flipped out over this baffling post-midnight tweet (later deleted): "Despite the constant negative press covfefe"

With that, Trump's twitter feed went silent for the next five and half hours.

Press secretary Sean Spicer played it straight at an afternoon briefing when reporters asked about the puzzling tweet.

"I think the president and a small group of people know exactly what he meant," Spicer dead-panned, drawing laughter from the group.

Death toll at 90 in huge suicide bombing in Afghan capital

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — A suicide attacker struck the fortified heart of the Afghan capital with a massive truck bomb Wednesday, killing 90 people, wounding 400 and raising new fears about the government's ability to protect its citizens nearly 16 years into a war with insurgents.

The bomber drove into Kabul's heavily guarded diplomatic quarter during the morning rush hour, leaving behind a bloody scene of chaos and destruction in one of the

worst attacks since the drawdown of foreign forces from Afghanistan in 2014.

Most of the casualties were civilians, including women and children, said Ismail Kawasi, spokesman of the public health ministry. But the dead also included Afghan security guards at the facilities, including the U.S. Embassy, while 11 American contractors were wounded — none with life-threatening injuries, a U.S. State Department official said.

"I have been to many attacks, taken wounded people out of many blast sites, but I can say I have ever seen such a horrible attack as I saw this morning," ambulance driver Alef Ahmadzai told The Associated Press. "Everywhere was on fire and so many people were in critical condition."

There was no claim of responsibility for the attack, which came in the first week of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The Taliban flatly denied any involvement in an email to news outlets and condemned all attacks against civilians.

Russia fires cruise missiles, targets IS positions in Syria

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian warships in the Mediterranean Sea have fired four cruise missiles at the Islamic State group's positions in Syria, the Russian defense ministry said on Wednesday.

The announcement came as Syrian government troops pushed ahead in their offensive against IS and militants in central and northern Syria.

Moscow said in a statement that the Admiral Essen frigate and the Krasnodar submarine launched the missiles at IS targets in the area of the ancient town of Palmyra. There was no information on when the missiles were launched.


Syrian troops have been on the offensive for weeks in northern, central and southern part of the country against IS and U.S.-backed rebels under the cover of Russian airstrikes.

Most recently, Syrian troops and their allies have been marching toward the IS stronghold of Sukhna, about 37 miles northeast from Palmyra.

The strategic juncture in the Syrian desert aids government plans to go after IS in one of the militants' last major strongholds in Syria.

THE PENDLETON

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE



THANK YOU VOTERS

for the passing of the fire station bond on May 16th. Our goal is to help build a practical and efficient building that our community members will be proud of.