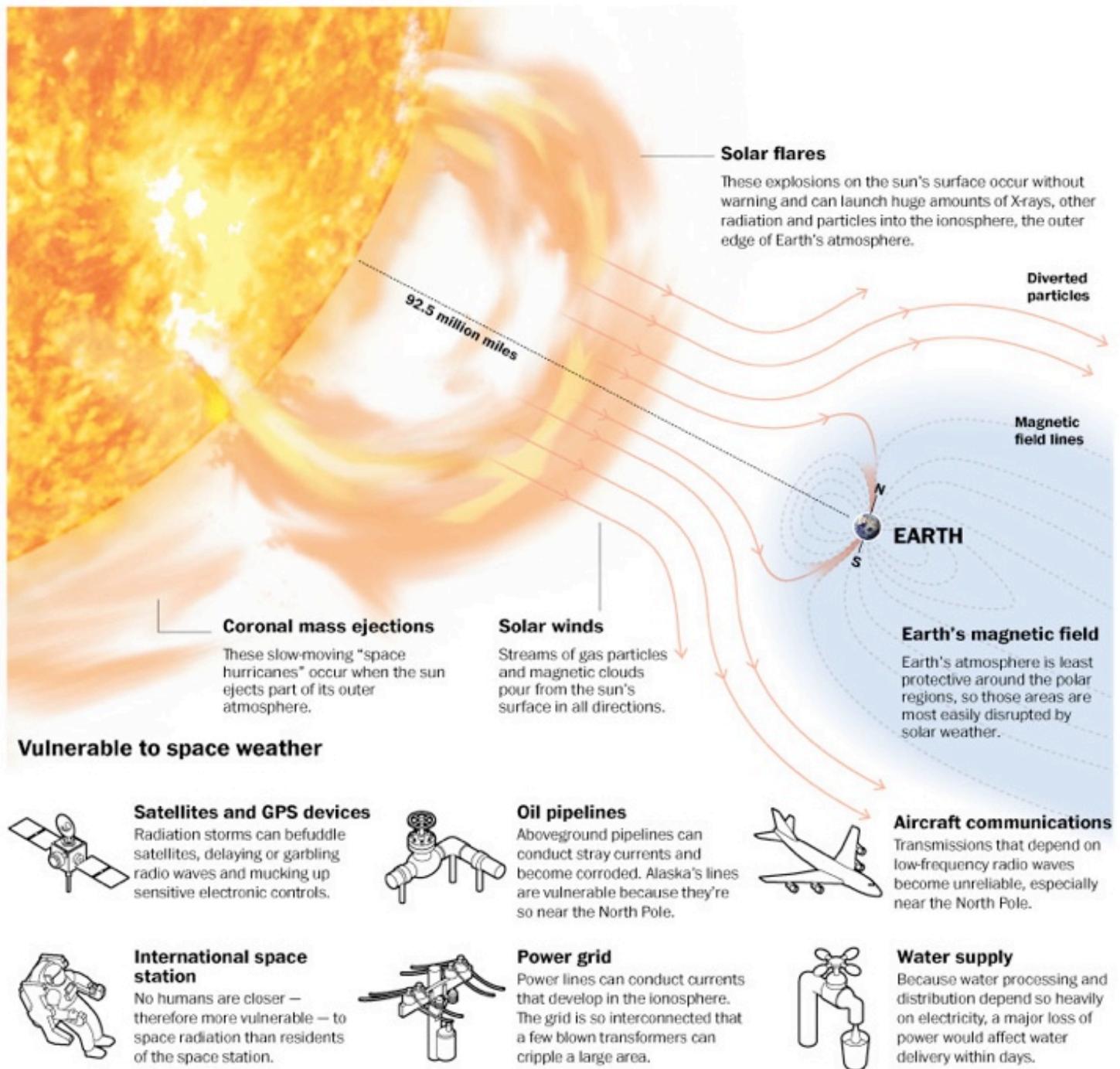


# Space Weather in Ionosphere and Thermosphere

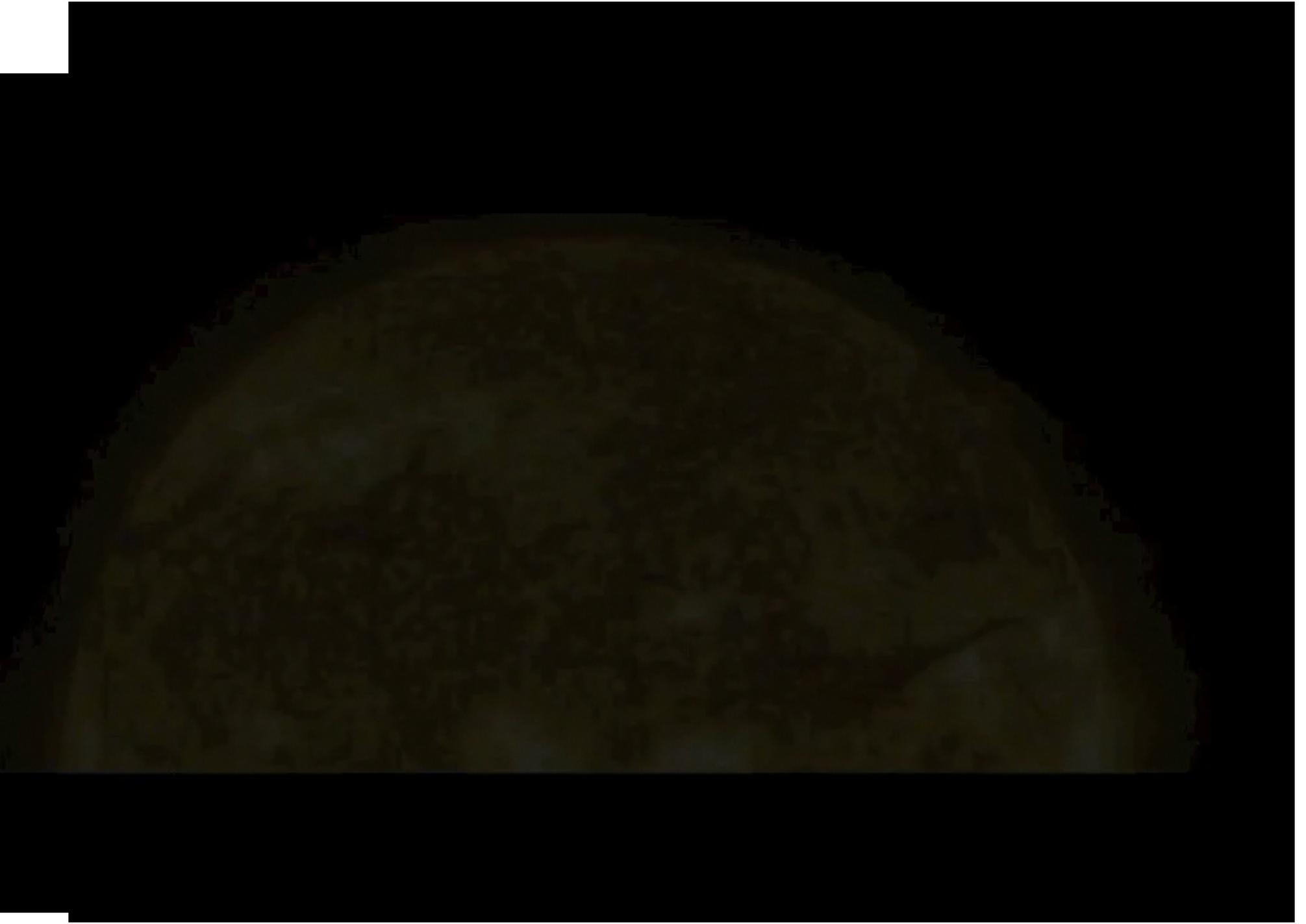
Yihua Zheng

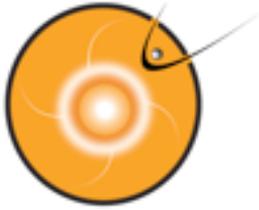
For SW REDI 2014

# Space Weather Illustrated

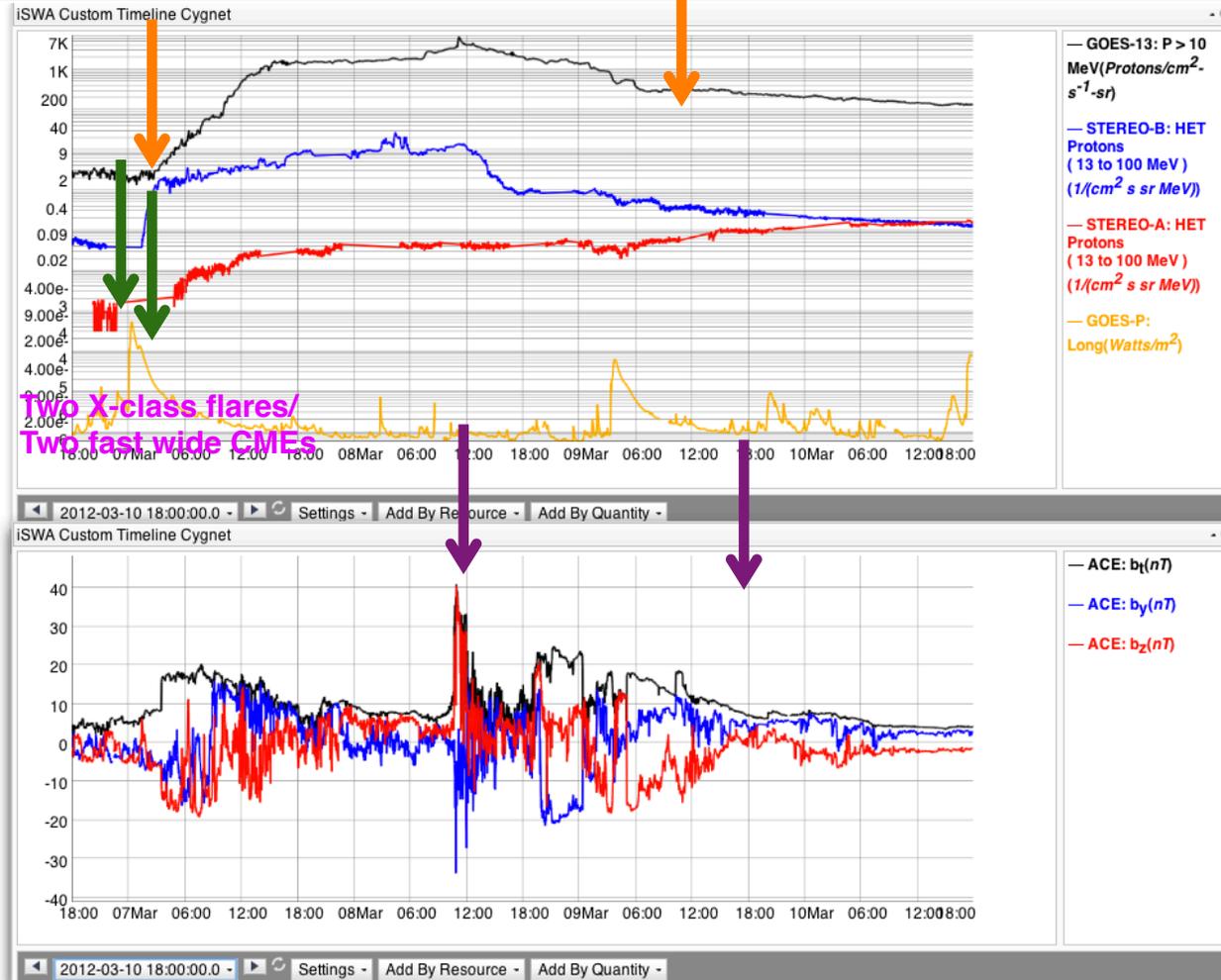
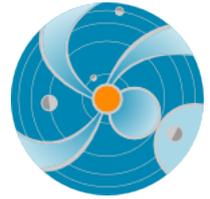


Sun and Earth are shown to approximate scale, but distance is not to scale.





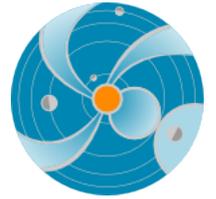
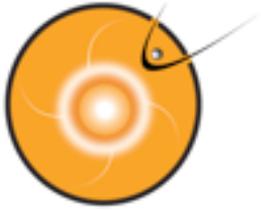
# Space Weather Effects and Timeline (Flare and CME)



**Flare effects at Earth:**  
~ 8 minutes (radio blackout storms)  
Duration: minutes to hours

**SEP radiation effects reaching Earth:** 20 minutes – 1 hour after the event onset  
Duration: a few days

**CME effects arrives @ Earth:** 1-2 days (35 hours here)  
Geomagnetic storms: a couple of days

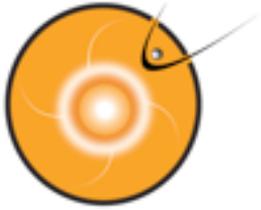


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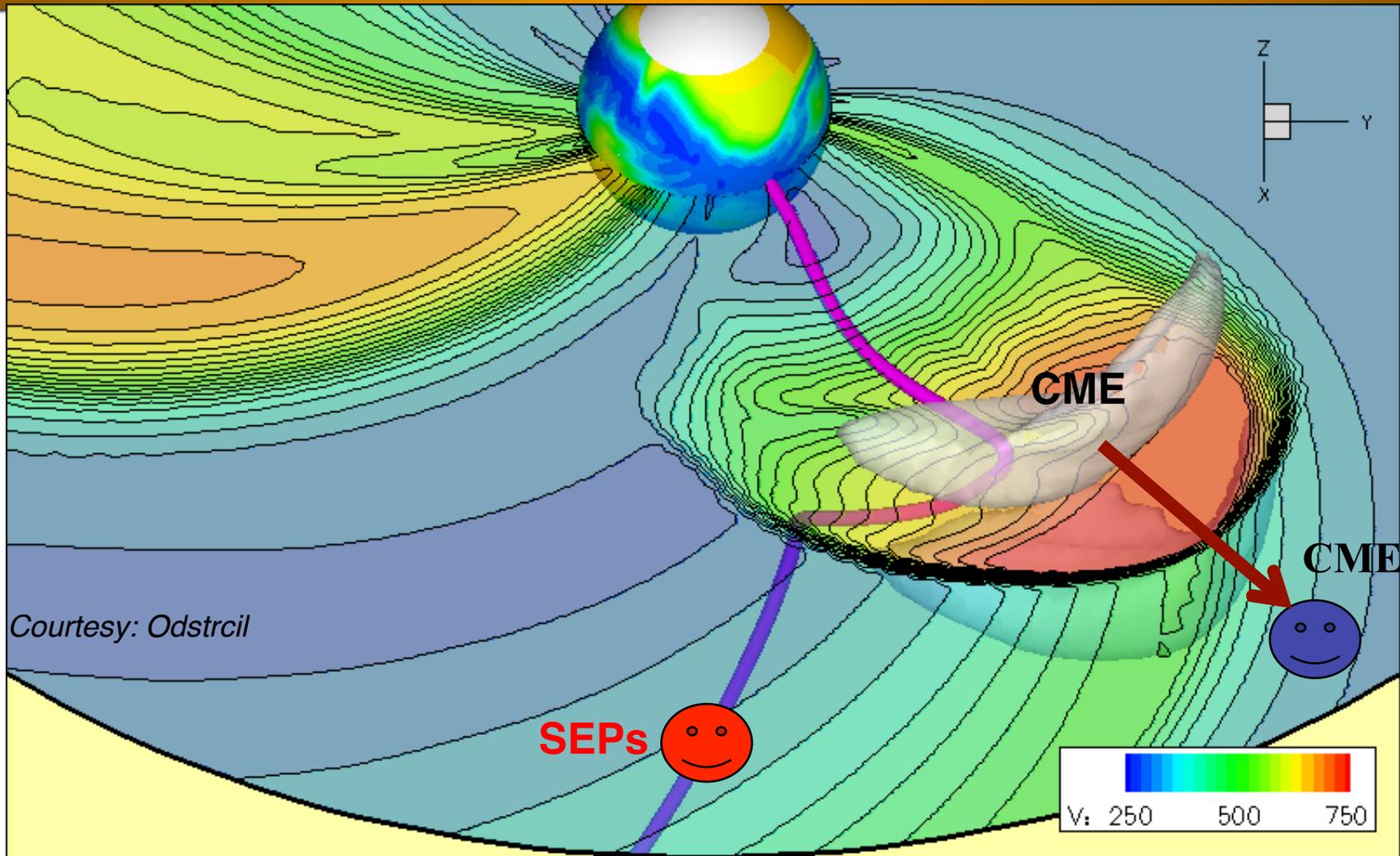
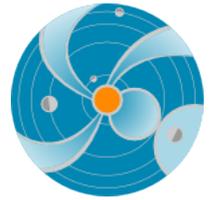
# Types of Storms

---





# CME and SEP path are different



CME: could get deflected, bended, but more or less in the radial direction

- Earth      ● Mars      ● Mercury      ● Venus
- Spitzer    ■ Stereo\_A   ■ Stereo\_B

# Important distinction

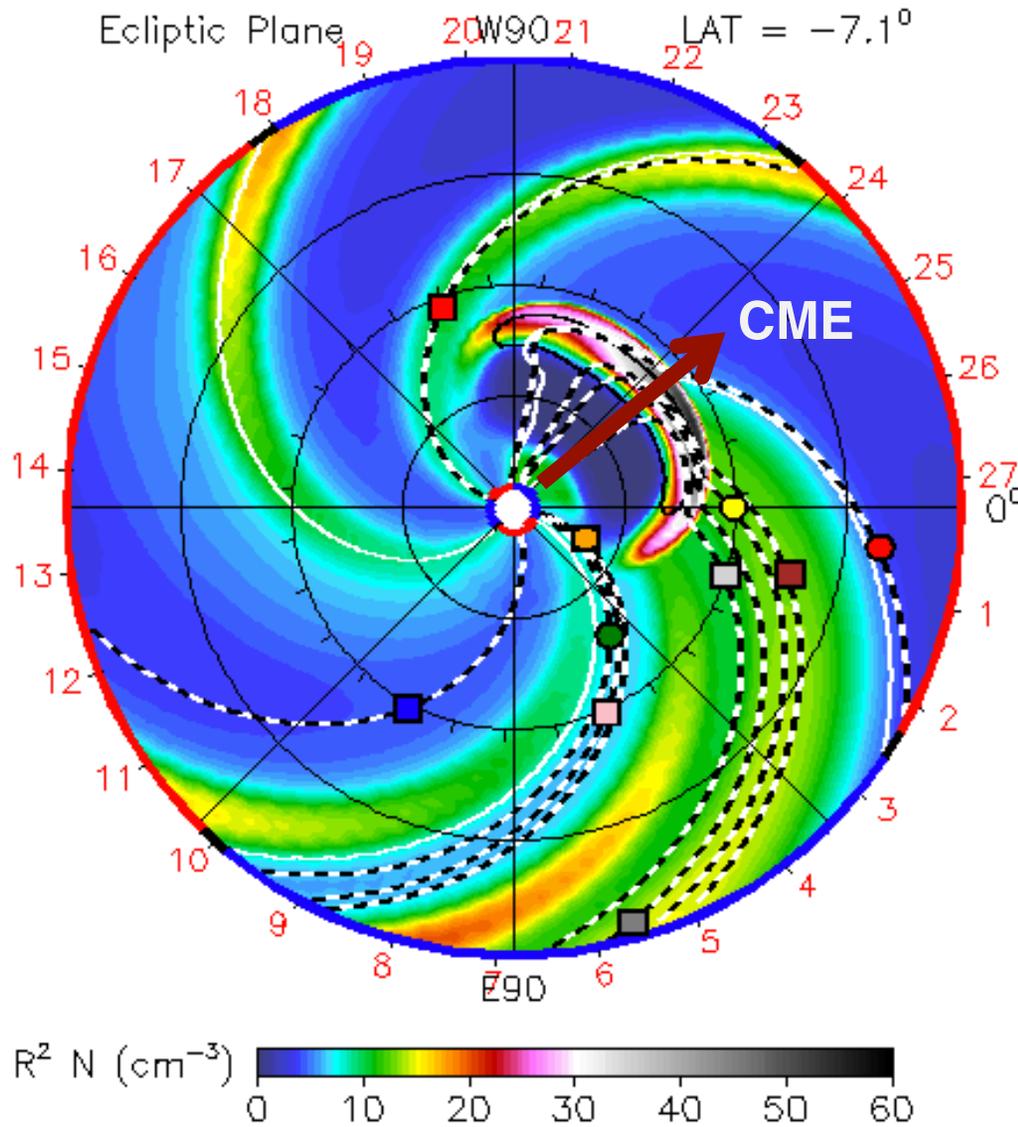
## Ion Radiation storm vs Geomagnetic storm

CME impact and SEP (Solar Energetic Particle) impact are different

CME impact @ Earth:  
Geomagnetic Storm

Radiation storm @ Earth from  
SEPs

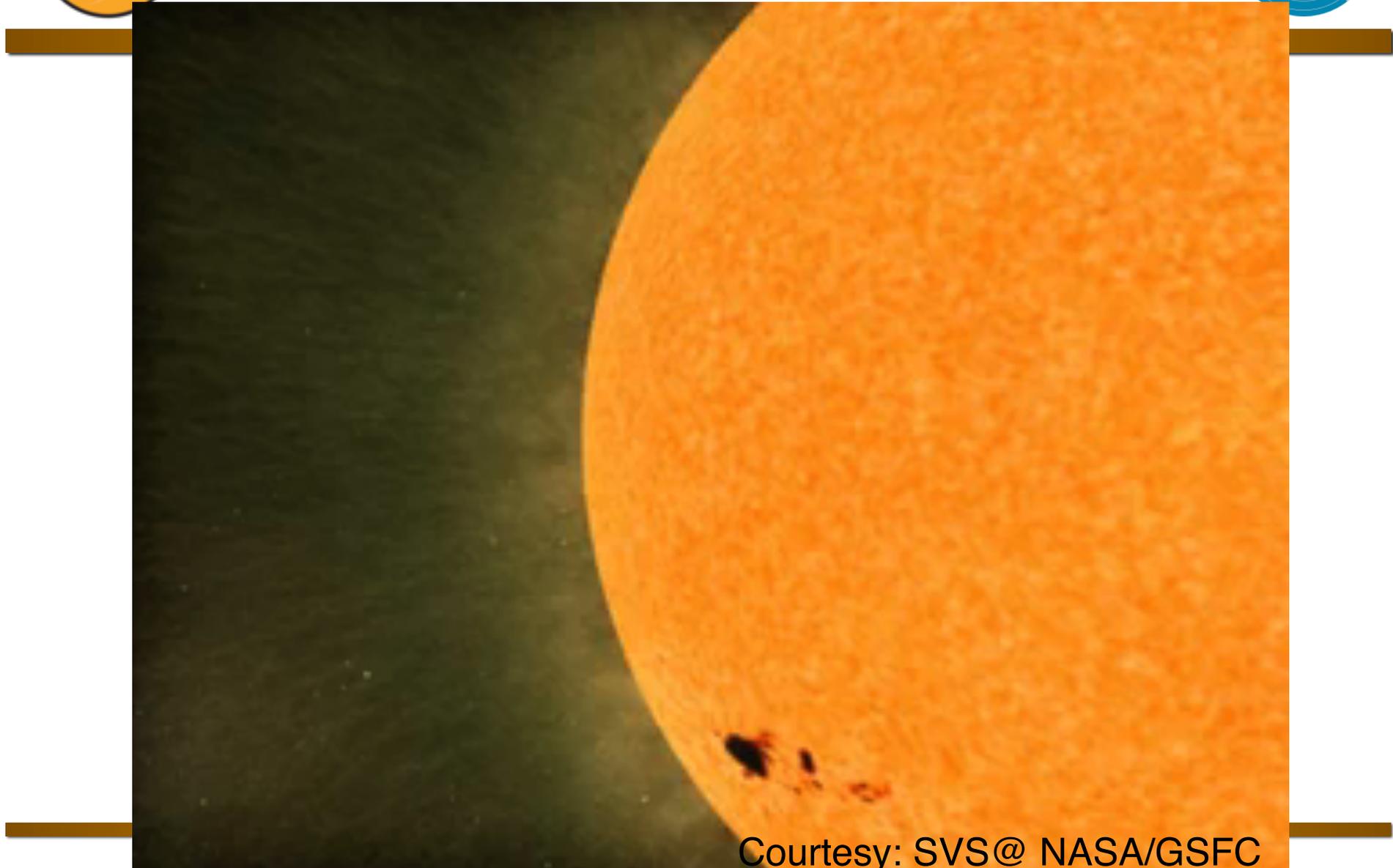
CME speed: 300 – 3500 km/s  
SEPs: fraction of c  
Light speed c:  $3 \times 10^8$  km/s



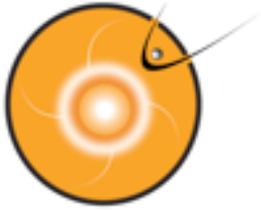


# SEPs: ion radiation storms

Potentially affect everywhere in the solar system

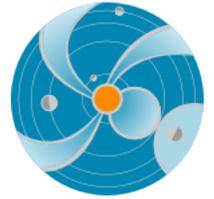


Courtesy: SVS@ NASA/GSFC

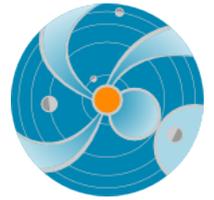
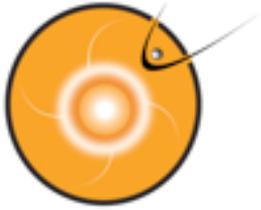


# Geomagnetic Storms:

CME interaction with Earth (magnetic field)



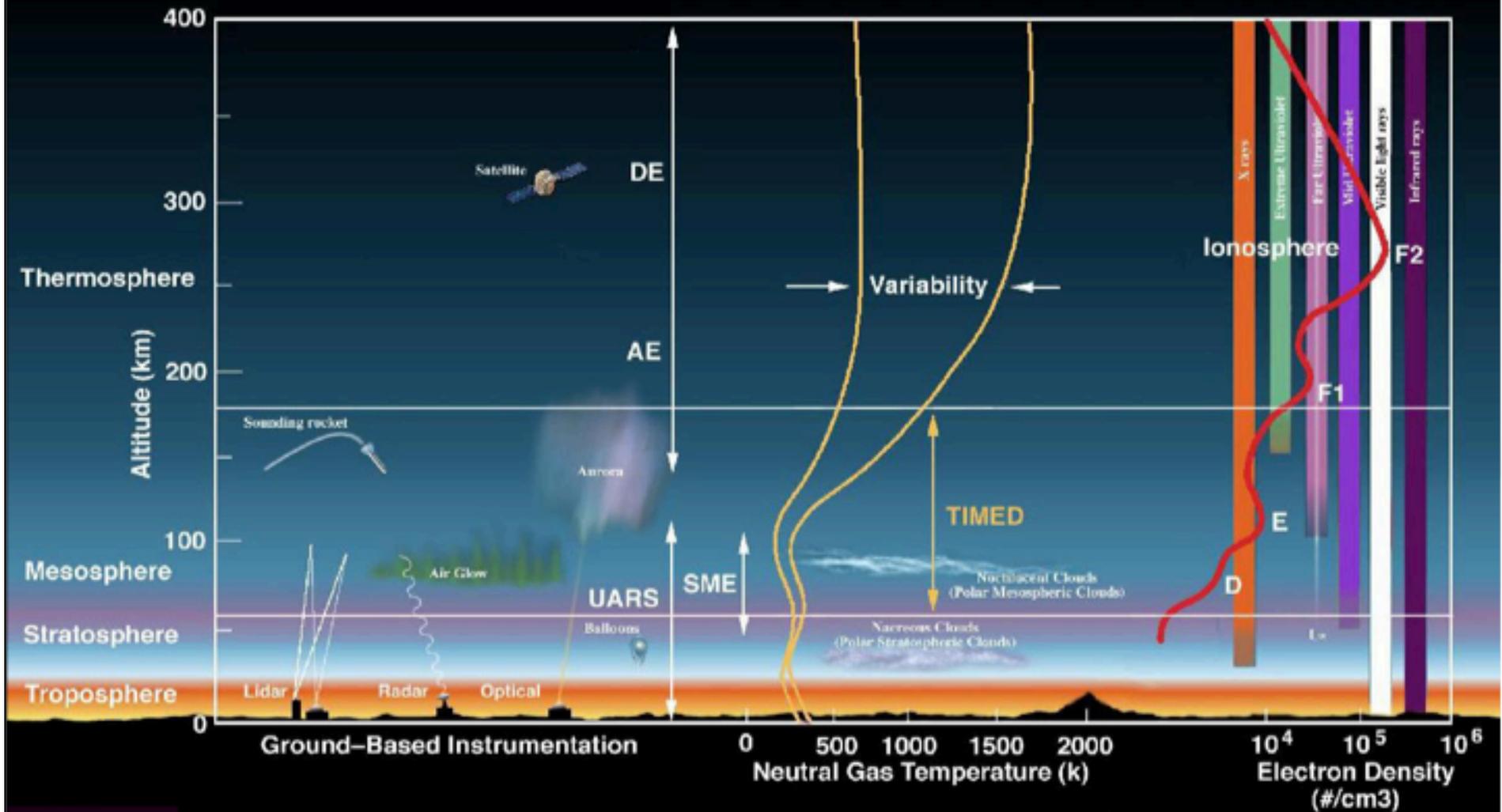
Geomagnetic storms due to CIRs are at most moderate



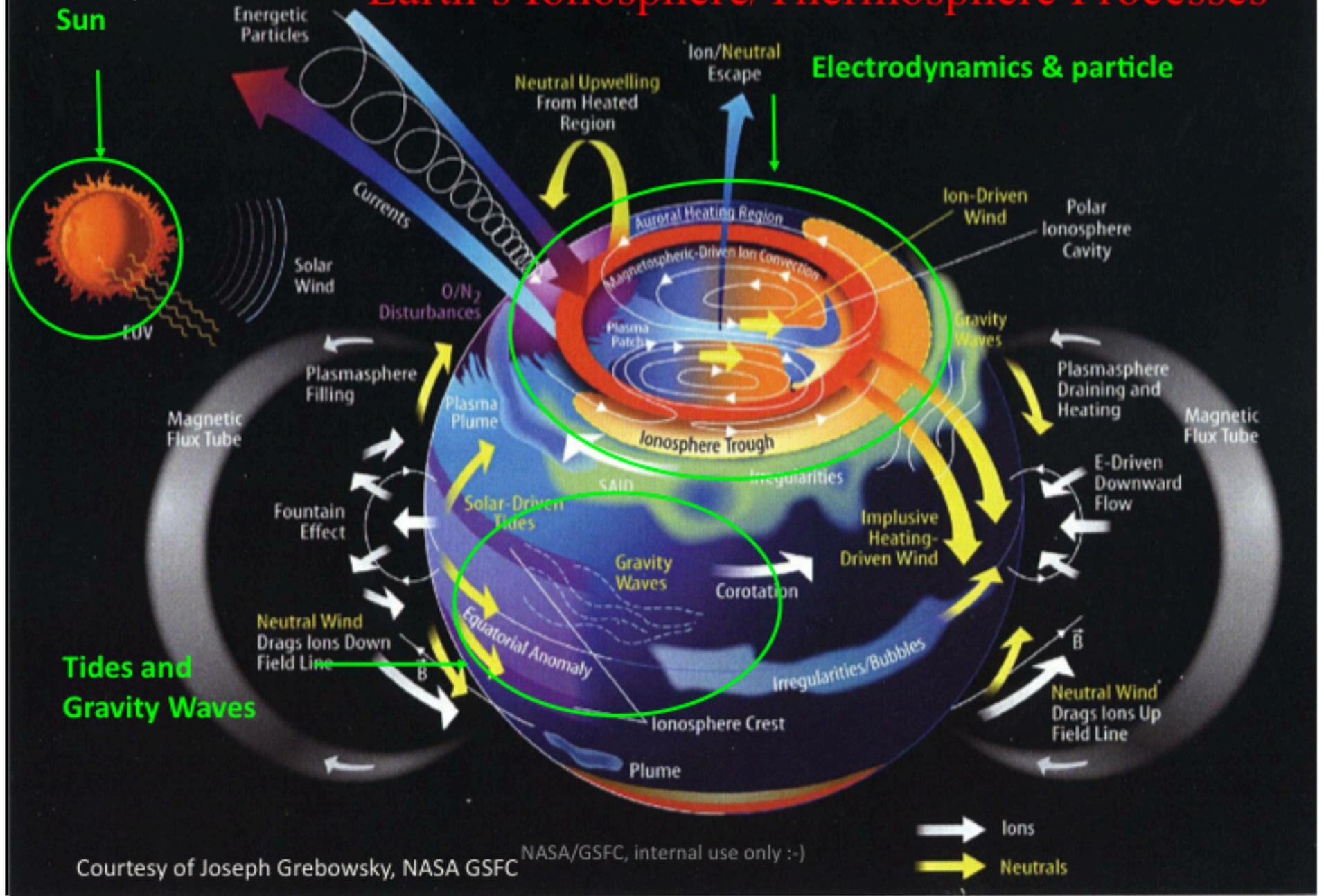
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## **Ionospheric Dynamics/Storms**

# Ionosphere - Thermosphere Overview



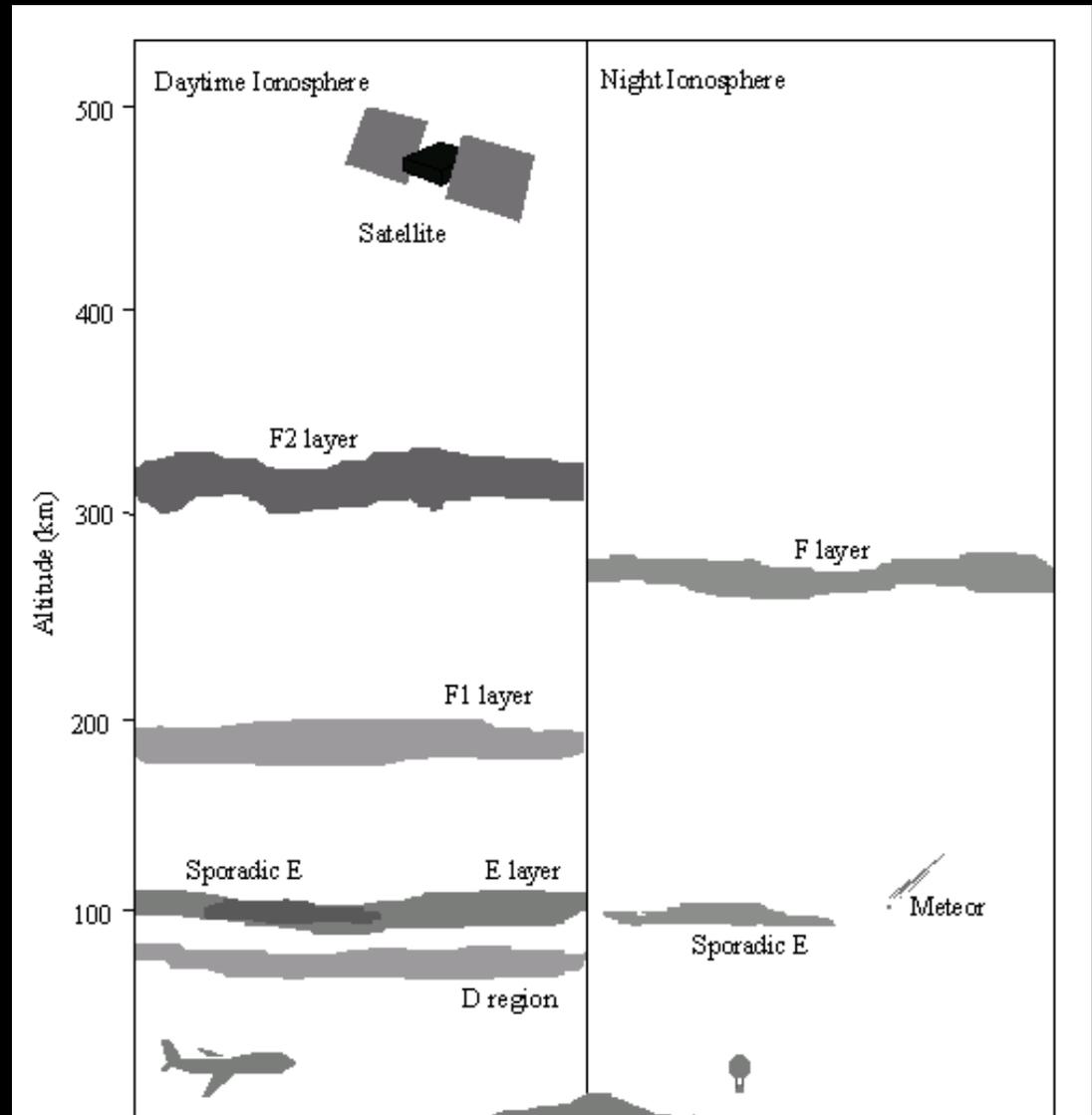
# Earth's Ionosphere/Thermosphere Processes



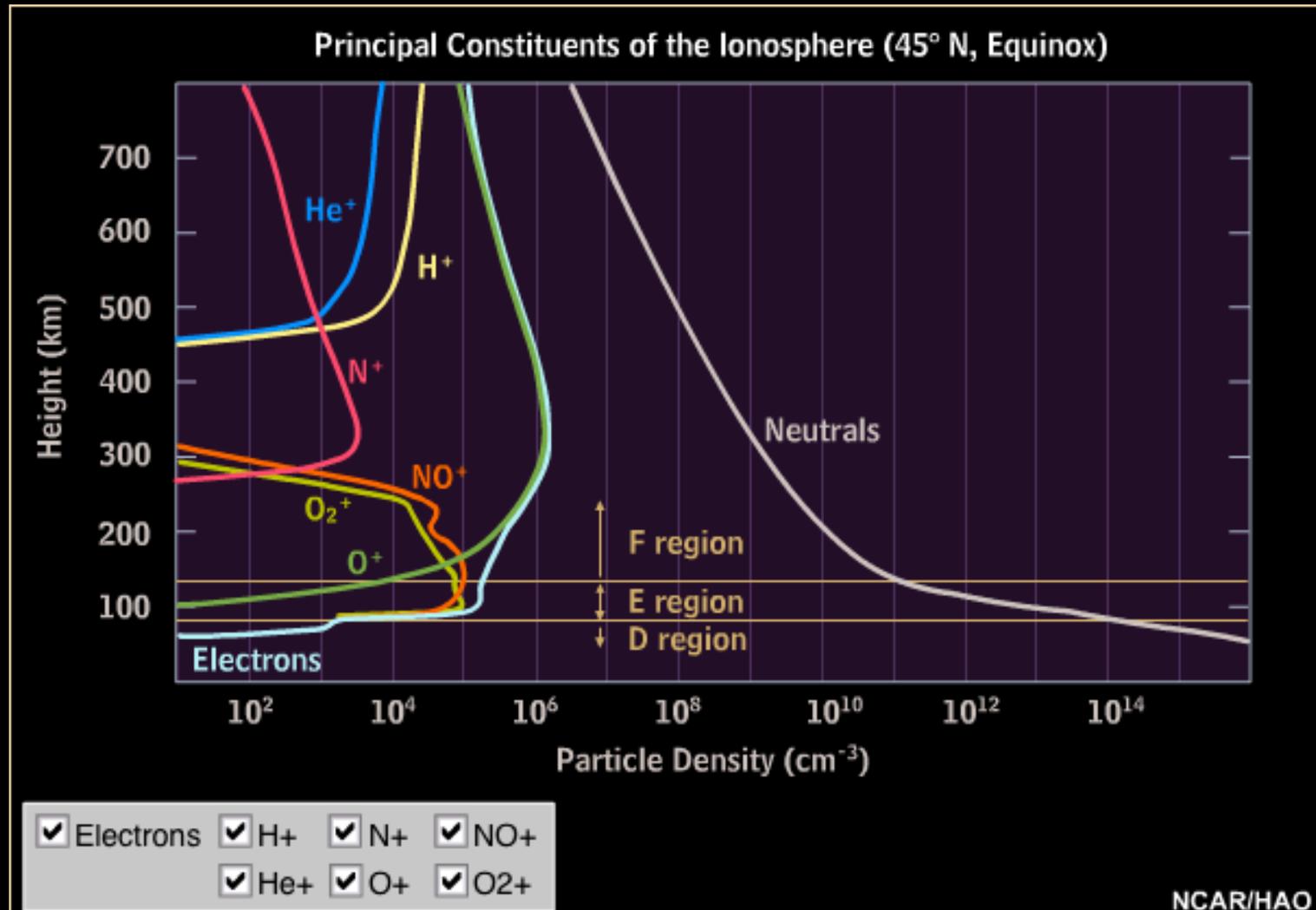
# Day/night ionospheric structure

Day/night ionosphere is very different

D region 50 to 90 km;  
E region 90 to 140 km;  
F1 region 140 to 210 km;  
F2 region over 210 km.



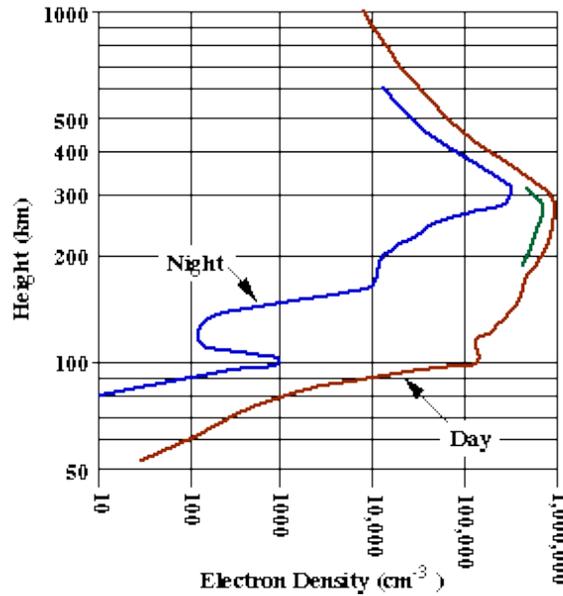
# Composition of ionosphere



# Ionosphere 101

Formed by solar EUV/UV radiation

Reflects, refracts, diffracts & scatters radio waves, depending on frequency, density, and gradients

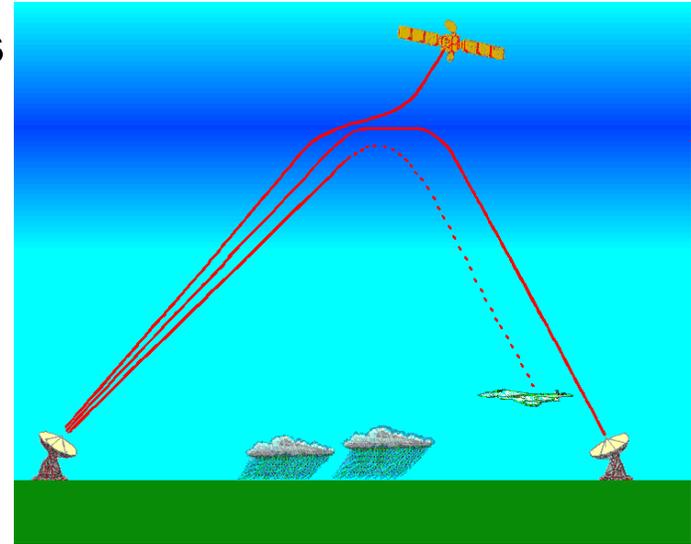


## Dielectric Properties

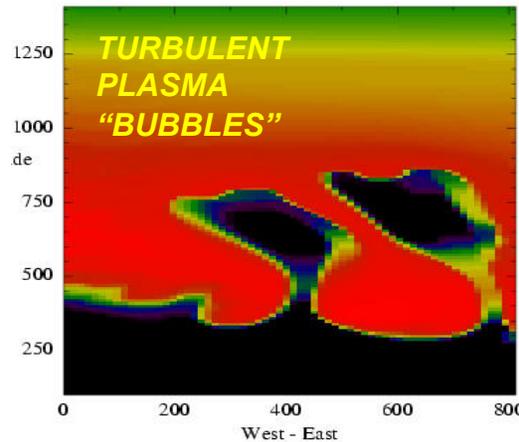
$$\epsilon = \left( 1 - \frac{f_p^2}{f^2} \right) \epsilon_0$$

F<sub>2</sub> Layer  
F<sub>1</sub> Layer  
E Layer  
D Layer

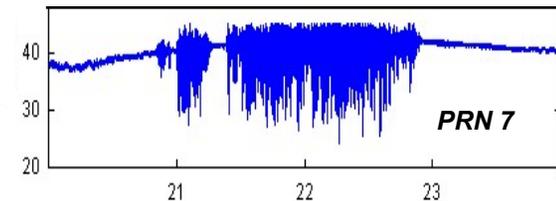
$$f_p \approx 9 \cdot 10^3 \sqrt{n_e}$$



Subject to Raleigh-Taylor instability at night → formation of Equatorial Plasma Bubbles (EPBs)



Leads to highly variable reflection / refraction = "SCINTILLATION"



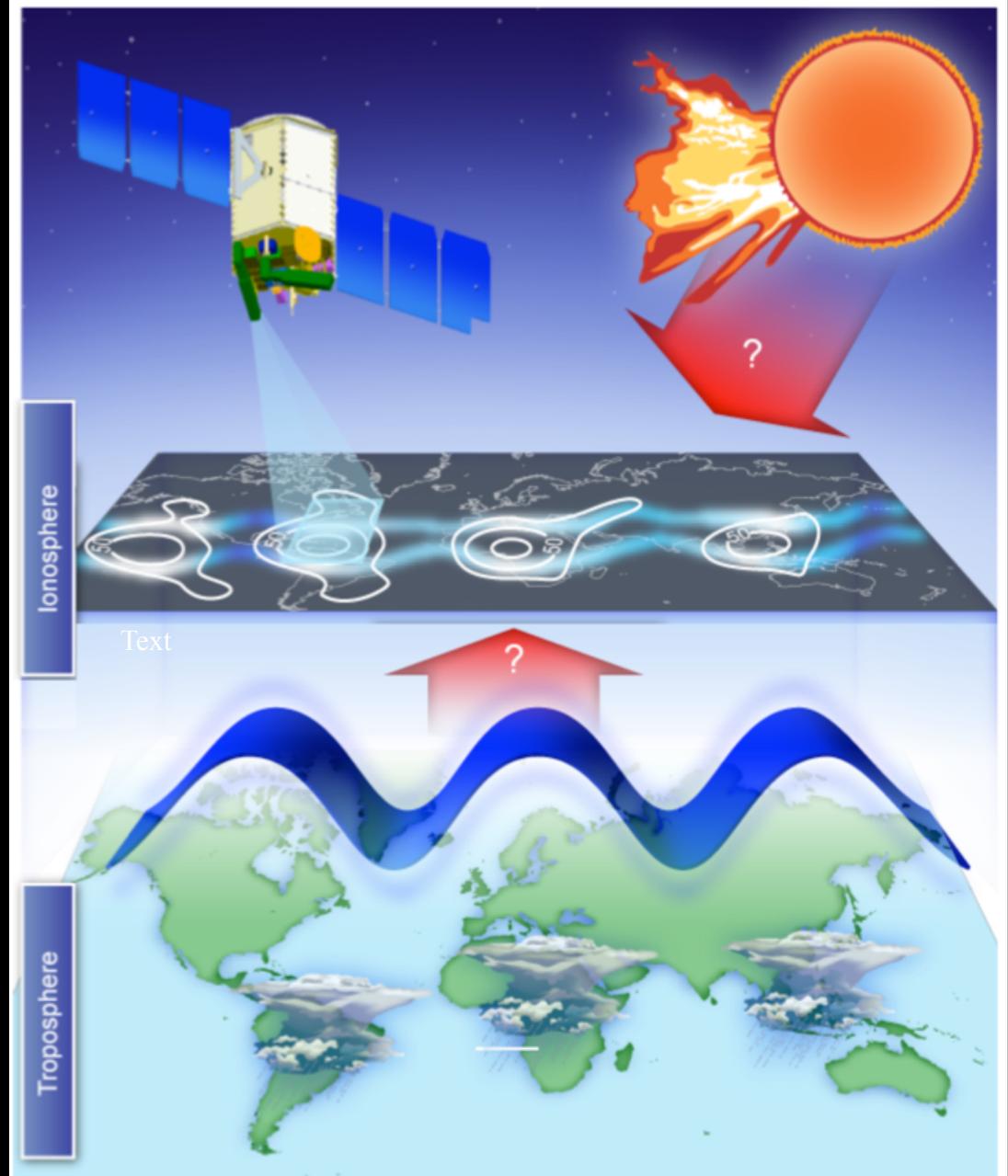
Scintillated GPS Signal

Courtesy: de la beaujardiere

The ionosphere is the densest plasma between the Earth and Sun, and is traditionally believed to be mainly influenced by forcing from **above** (solar radiation, solar wind/ magnetosphere)

Recent scientific results show that the ionosphere is strongly influenced by forces acting from **below**.

**Research remains to be done:  
How competing influences from above and below shape our space environment.**



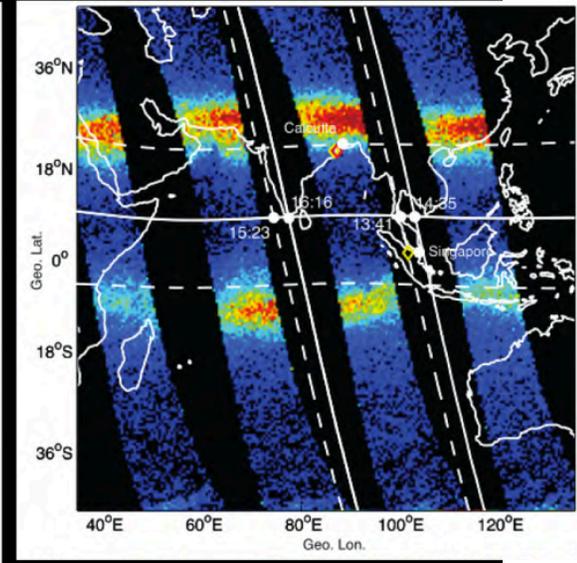
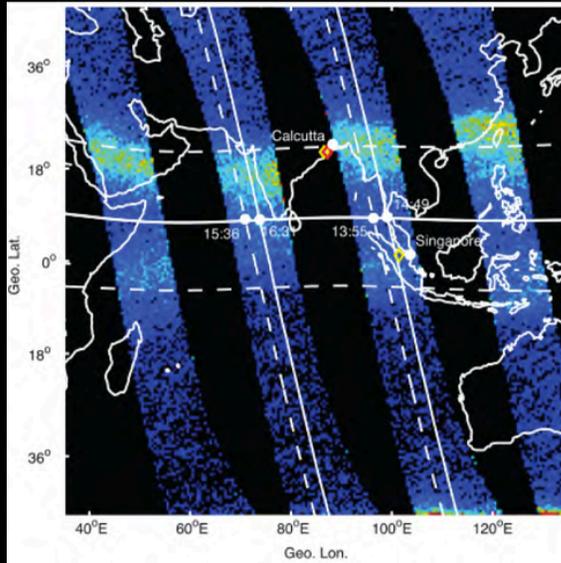
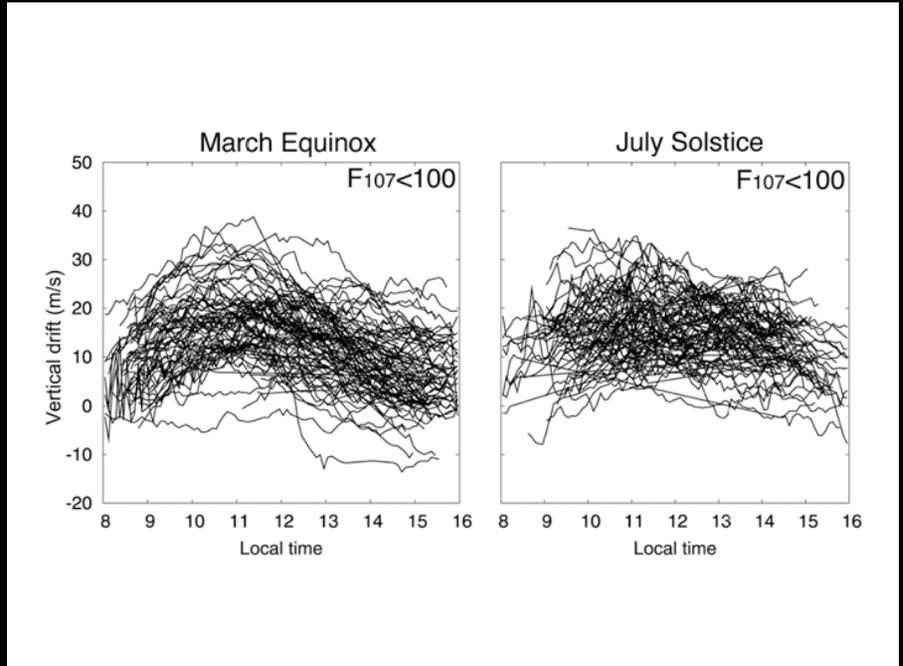
Courtesy: ICON

The daytime ionosphere exhibits significant variability in its motion and density. the source of these changes: unknown

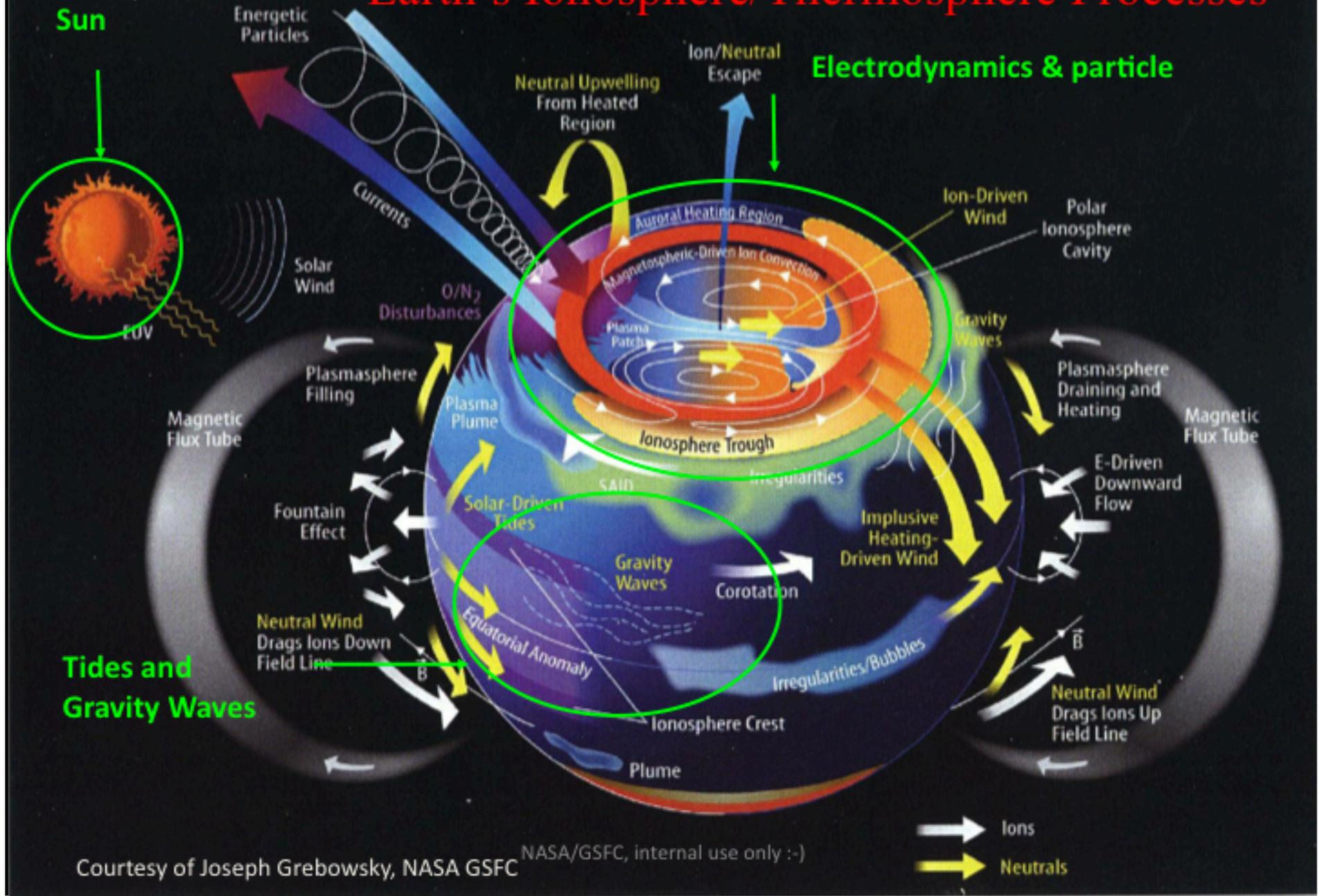
likely originates with modulation of neutral and/or ionized state variables along the magnetic field - need to be determined

**coupled ion-neutral dynamics**

**critical**



# Earth's Ionosphere/Thermosphere Processes



# Space Weather Phenomena and Effects in the Ionosphere

Aurora – hemispheric power (satellite charging,  
scintillation)

Satellite drag due to neutrals

Equatorial bubbles/irregularities –scintillation,  
communication problems

Radio blackout -- solar flare

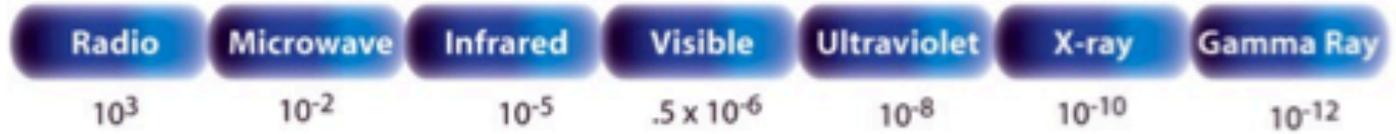
Polar Cap Absorption - solar energetic particles

# THE ELECTROMAGNETIC SPECTRUM

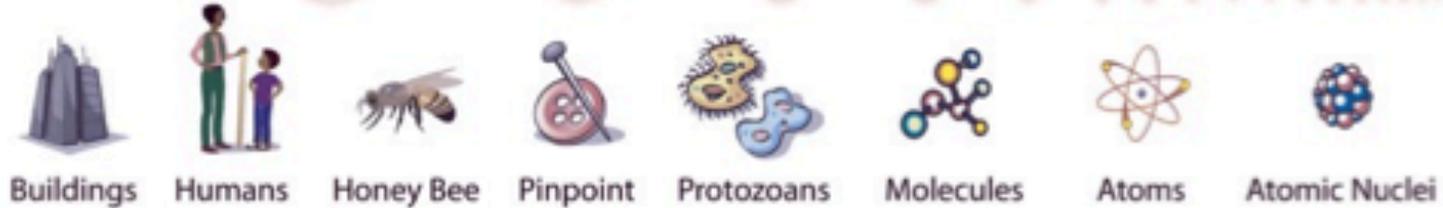
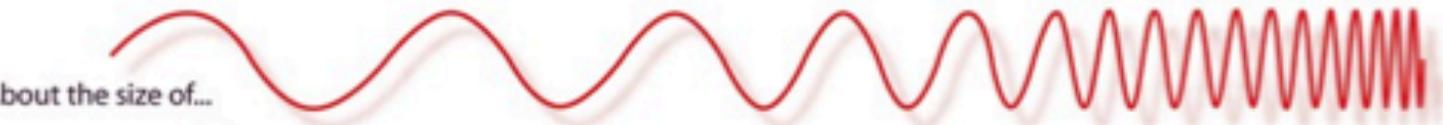
Penetrates Earth Atmosphere?



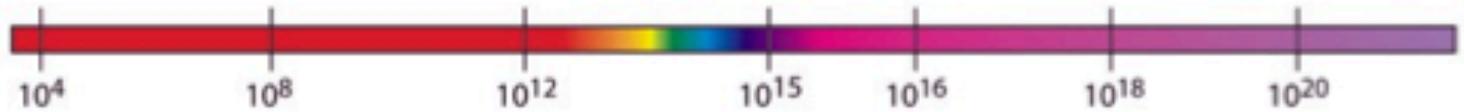
Wavelength (meters)



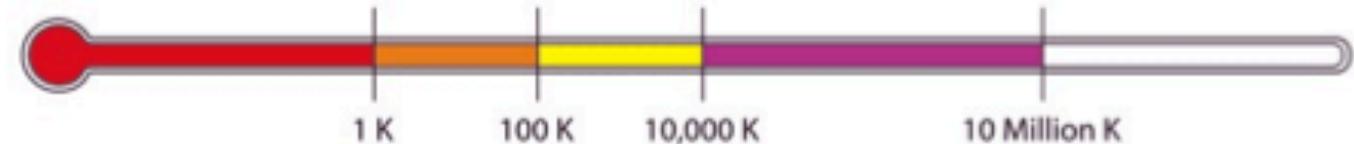
About the size of...



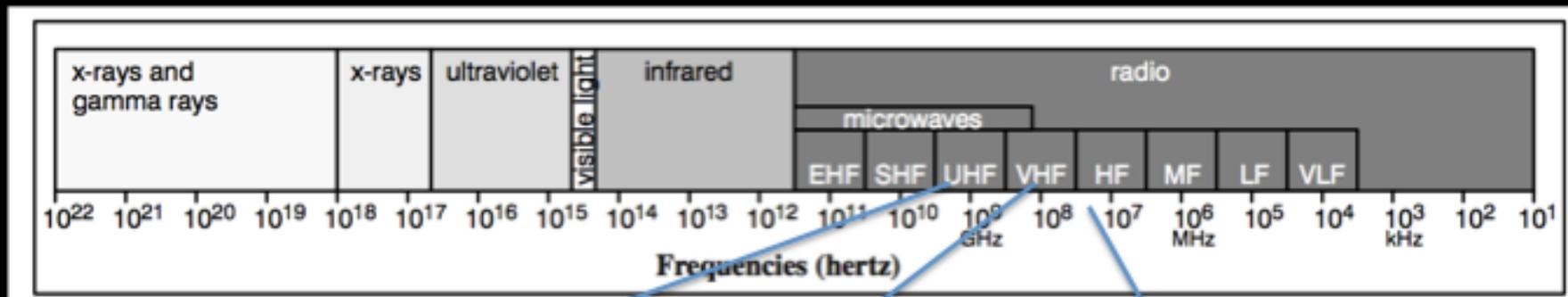
Frequency (Hz)



Temperature of bodies emitting the wavelength (K)



# Types of space weather events affecting nav and commu



## UHF – GPS

- Energetic protons/ particles – via SEEs - affecting GPS satellites components
- Geomagnetic storms/ ionospheric storm - cause scintillations

## VHF:

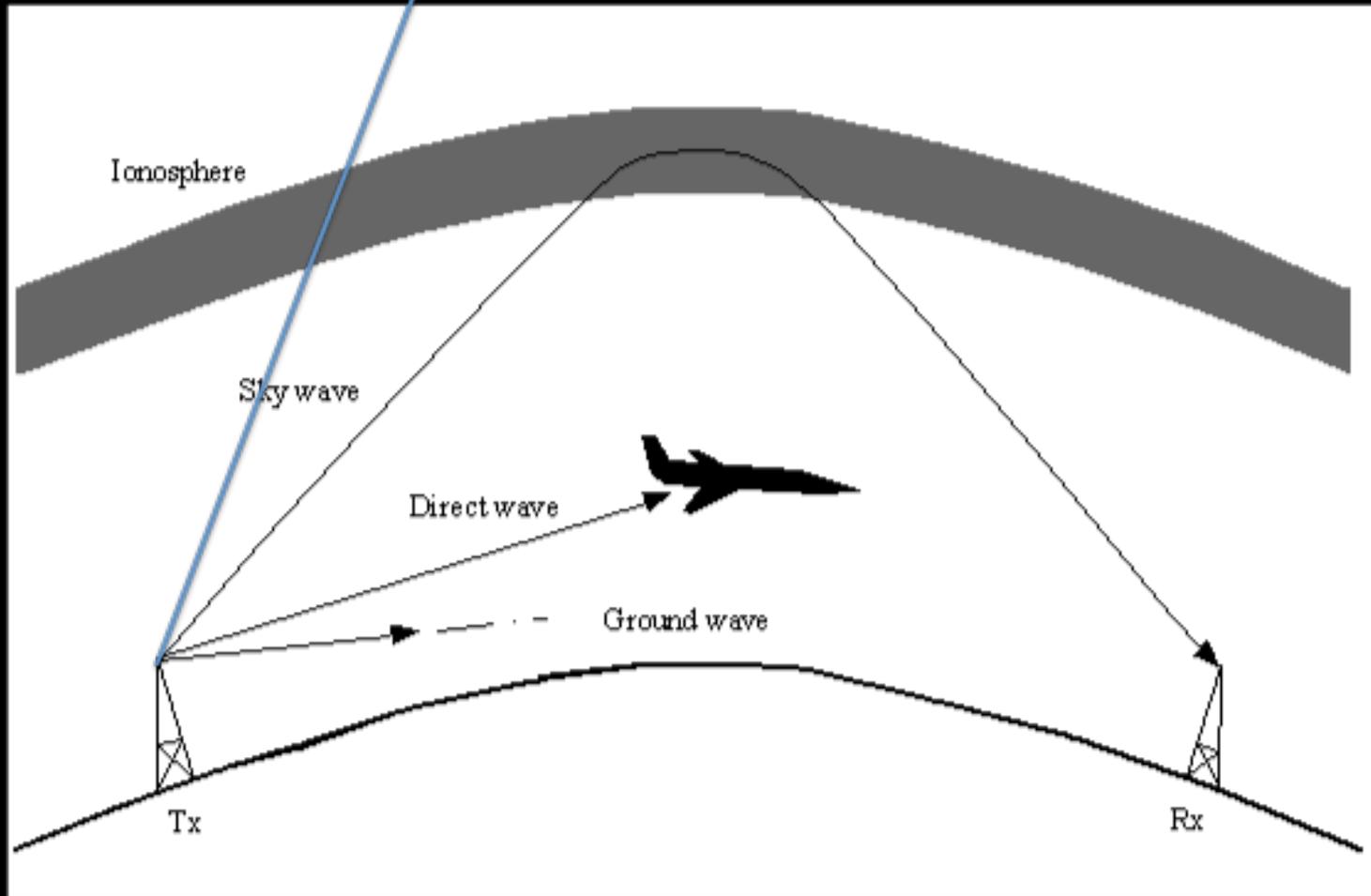
- Energetic protons - PCA
- Geomagnetic storms
- Solar radio emission associated with flare/CME

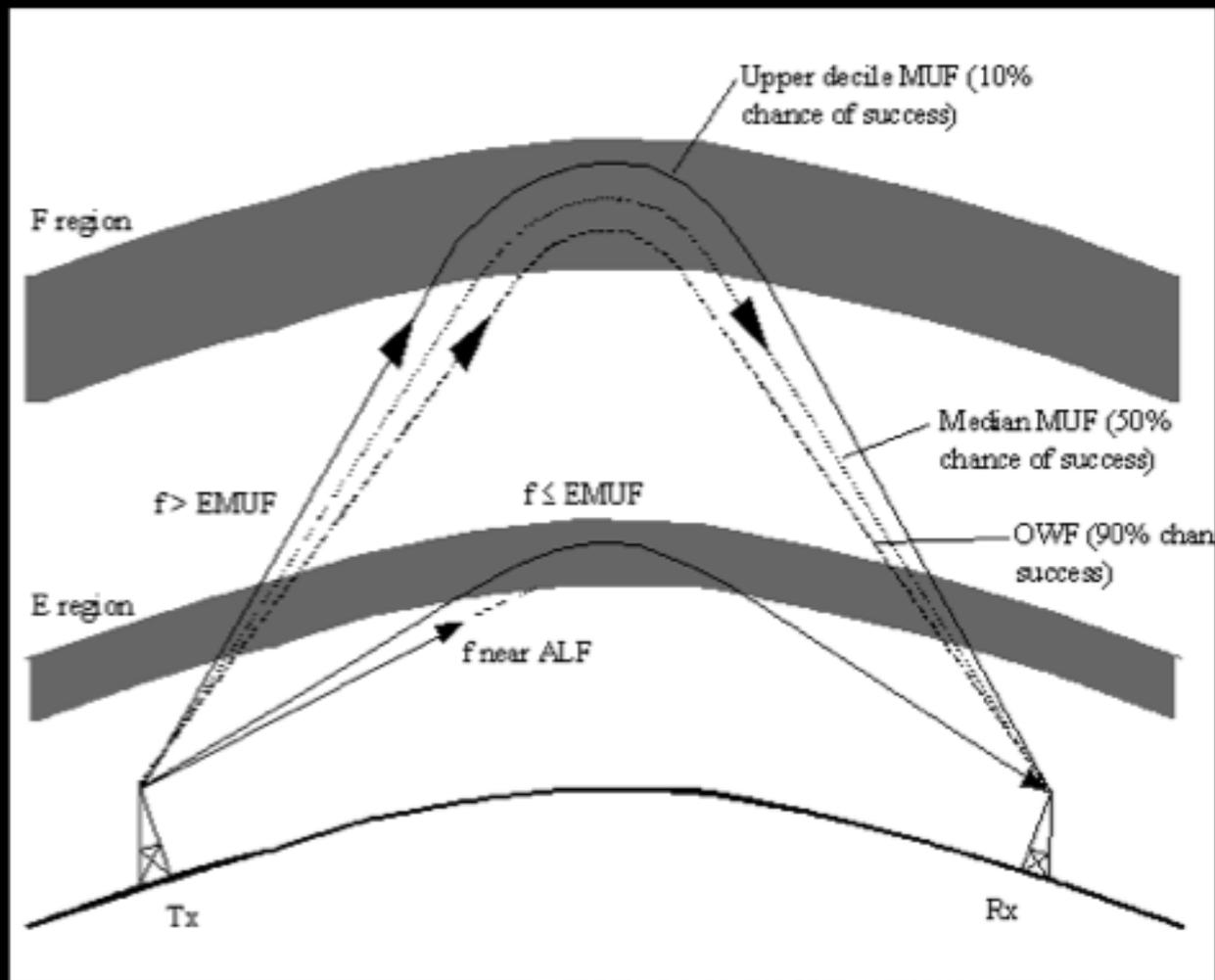
## HF:

- Solar flares/x-ray
- Energetic protons - PCA
- Geomagnetic activities

# Signals of different types with different purposes

GPS signal: Penetrate through the ionosphere





**ALF: Absorption Limiting Freq.**

1. SID (Sudden Ionospheric disturbance due to x-ray in solar flares)  
**dayside**
2. Solar energetic particle precipitation - particularly protons  
**High-latitude**
3. Geomagnetic storm disturbances  
**Ubiquitous/global**

Eruptive solar events

Ionosphere/  
Thermosphere

Magnetosphere

**Communication/Navigation  
Problem**

# Flare: SWx impacts

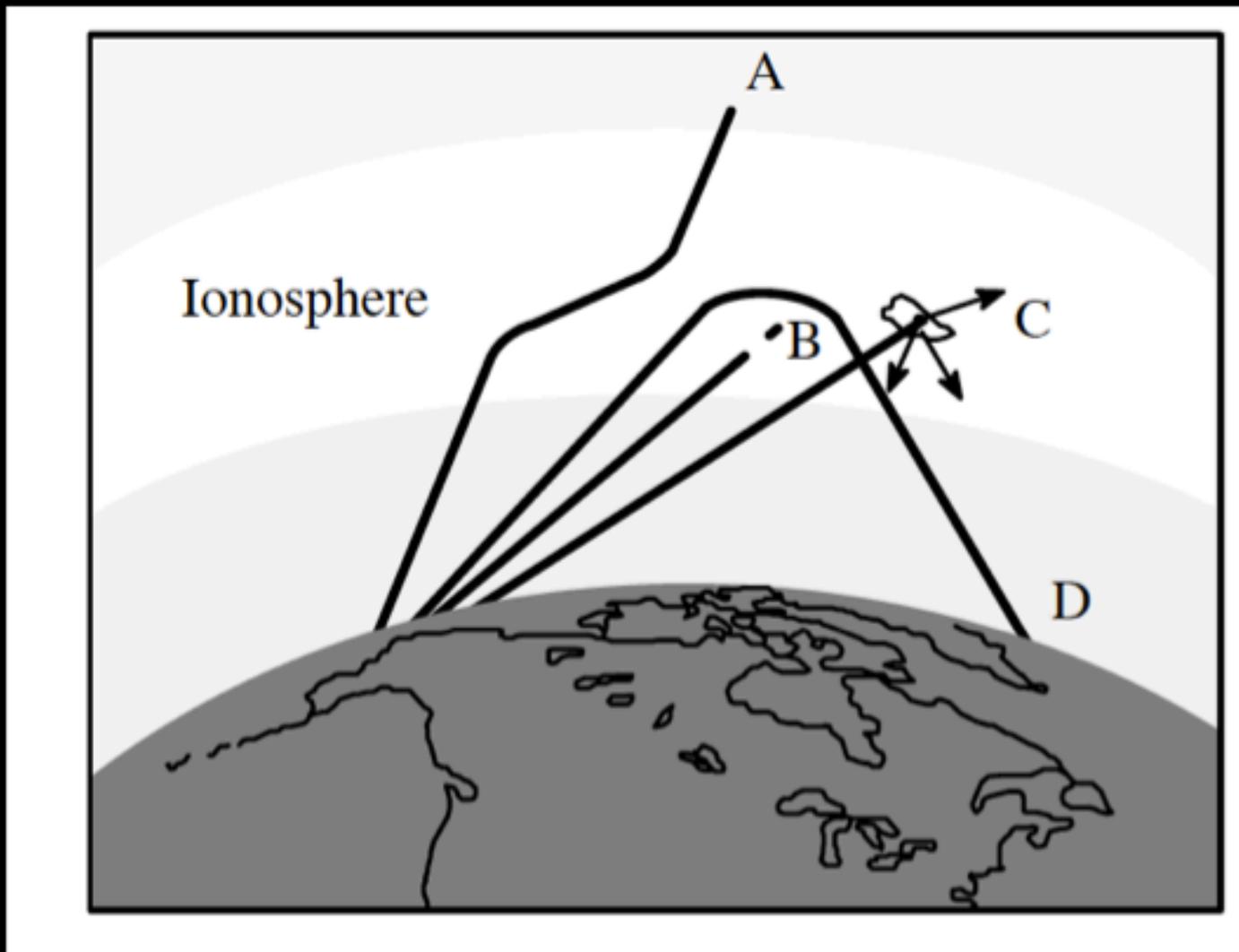
- Cause radio blackout through changing the structures/composition of the ionosphere (sudden ionospheric disturbances) – x ray and EUV emissions, lasting minutes to hours and dayside
- Affect radio comm., GPS, directly by its radio noises at different wavelengths
- Contribute to SEP – proton radiation, lasting a couple of days

# Solar radio bursts can directly affect GPS operation

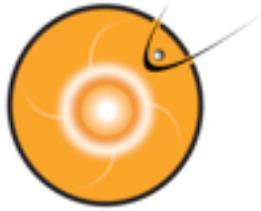
- Solar radio bursts during December 2006 were sufficiently intense to be measurable with GPS receivers. The strongest event occurred on 6 December 2006 and affected the operation of many GPS receivers. This event exceeded 1,000,000 solar flux unit and was about 10 times larger than any previously reported event. The strength of the event was especially *surprising* since the solar radio bursts occurred near solar minimum. The strongest periods of solar radio burst activity lasted a few minutes to a few tens of minutes and, in some cases, exhibited large intensity differences between L1 (1575.42 MHz) and L2 (1227.60 MHz). Civilian dual frequency GPS receivers were the most severely affected, and these events suggest that continuous, precise positioning services should account for solar radio bursts in their operational plans. This investigation raises the possibility of even more intense solar radio bursts during the next solar maximum that will significantly impact the operation of GPS receivers.

Cerruti et al., 2008, Space Weather

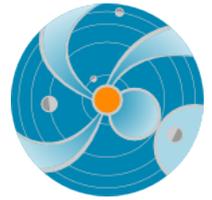
# Ionospheric impact on signal path



Could cause potential problems

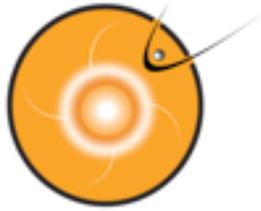


## Sudden Ionospheric Disturbances – solar x-ray

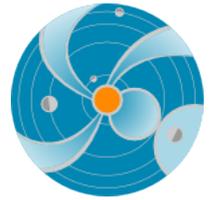


- ✓ An SID can affect very low frequencies (e.g., OMEGA) as a sudden phase anomaly (SPA) or a sudden enhancement of signal (SES). At HF, **and sometimes at VHF**, an SID may appear as a short-wave fade (SWF).
- ✓ May last from minutes to hours, depending upon the magnitude and duration of the flare.
- ✓ Absorption is **greatest at lower frequencies**, which are the first to be affected and the last to recover. Higher frequencies are normally less affected and may still be usable.

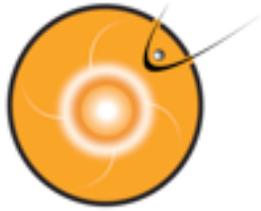
Radio blackout events



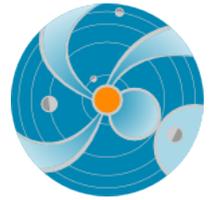
## Solar Radio Emission affecting VHF



- Type II radio emission
- Type IV radio emission
- Solar flares also create a wide spectrum of radio noise; at **VHF** (and under unusual conditions at HF) this noise may interfere directly with a wanted signal.



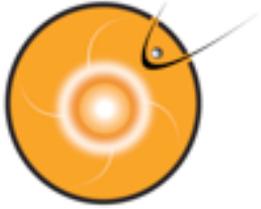
## Solar energetic particles



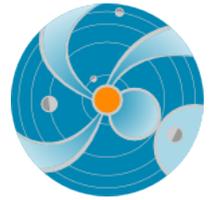
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### Radiation Storms

- HF/VHF degradation in polar region (a.k.a. Polar Cap Absorption)
  - Energetic particles have detrimental effects on the onboard systems of GPS satellites (SEE impacts on spacecraft component)
  - Energetic particle events can persist for a few days at a time
-



# Geomagnetic Storms



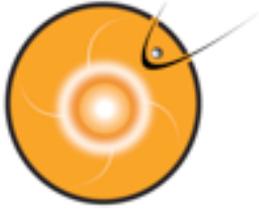
Global impacts

- CME storms
- CIR storms

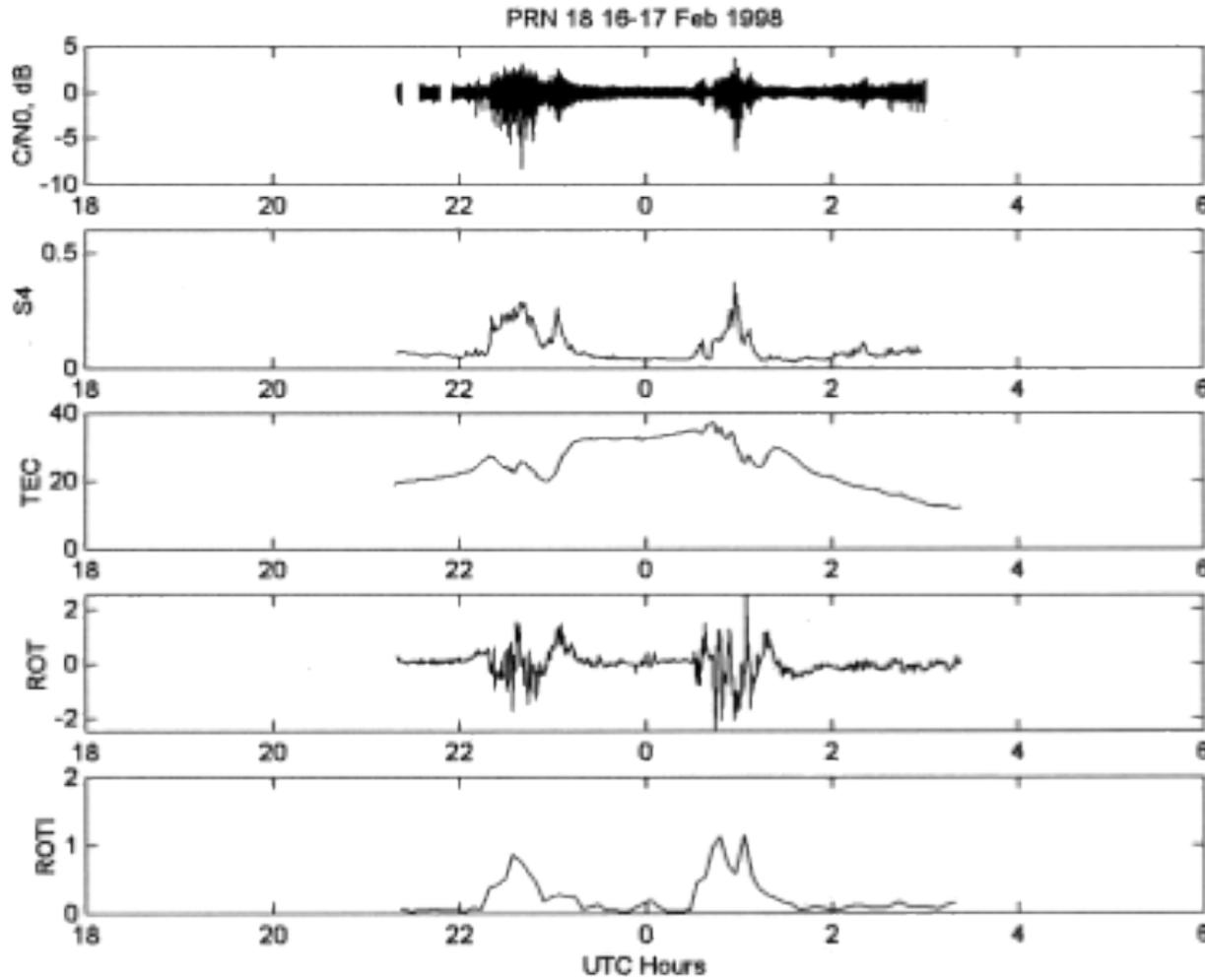
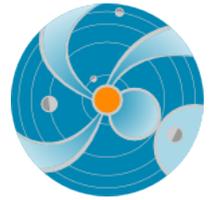
Affect HF radio communication – especially when the signal passing through the auroral zone or ionospheric irregularities

GPS - scintillation

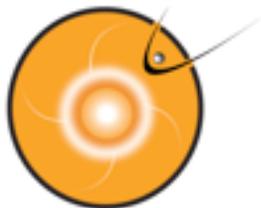
Geomagnetic storms may **last several days**, and ionospheric effects may last **a day or two longer**.



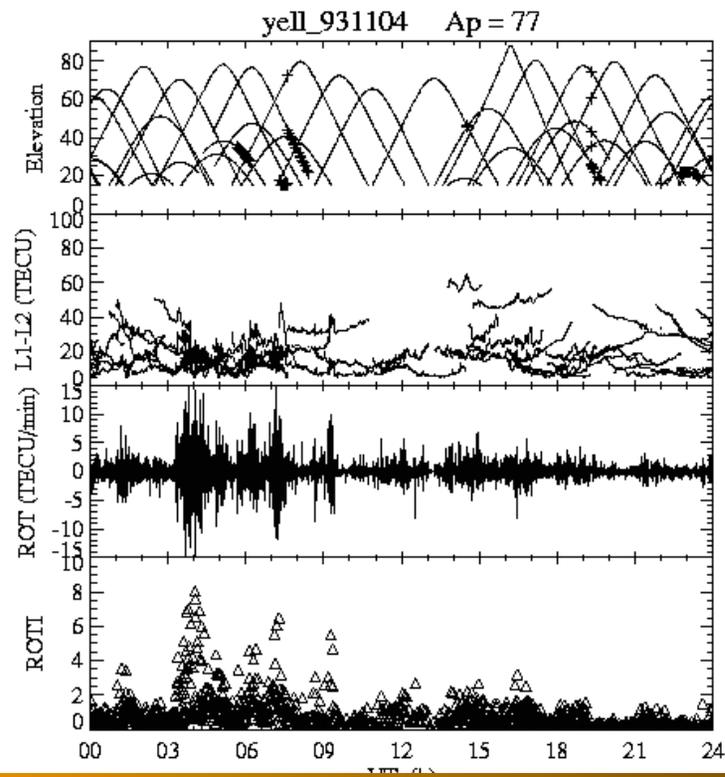
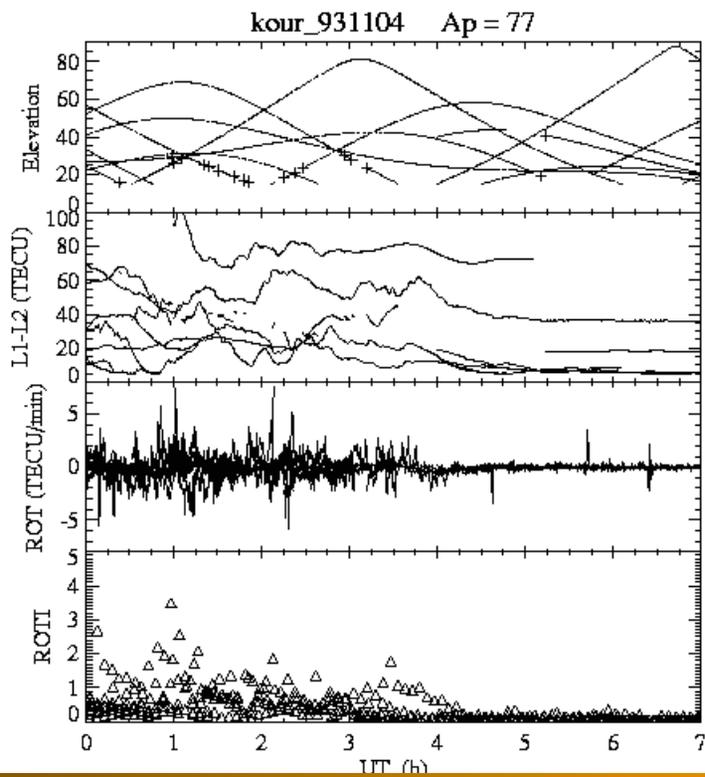
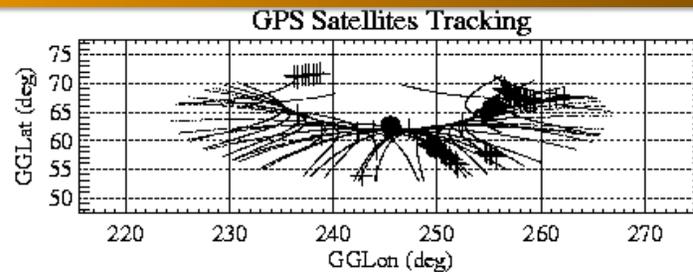
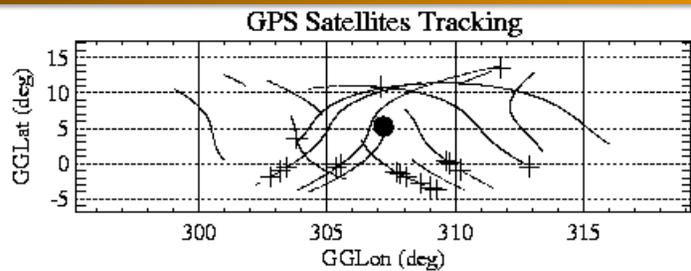
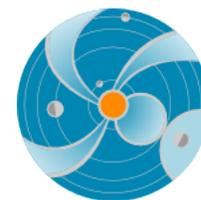
# Scintillation



*Basu et al., 1999*

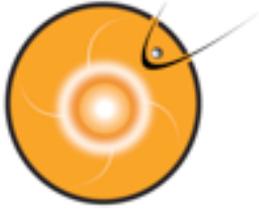


# Phase Scintillation

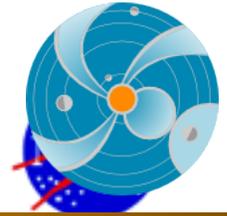


Low Lat

High Lat



# Ionospheric Scintillation Indices



$$S_4(f) = \sqrt{\frac{\langle I^2 \rangle - \langle I \rangle^2}{\langle I \rangle^2}} \propto f^{-1.5}$$

$$\sigma_\phi(f) = \sqrt{\langle \phi^2 \rangle - \langle \phi \rangle^2} \propto f^{-1}$$

$$\text{ROTI} = \sqrt{\langle \text{ROT}^2 \rangle - \langle \text{ROT} \rangle^2}$$

$$\text{ROT} = c \frac{\Phi_I(t + \Delta t) - \Phi_I(t)}{\Delta t}$$

- **$S_4$  and  $\sigma_\phi$  indices – amplitude and phase scintillation, respectively**

- $I$  – detrended signal intensity
- $\phi$  – detrended signal phase
- raw data is sampled at 20 or 10 ms (50 Hz or 100 Hz)
- frequency dependent
- Measurements of phase scintillation susceptible to local oscillator errors of transmitter and receiver

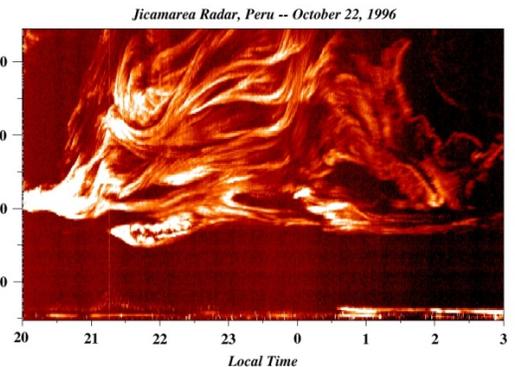
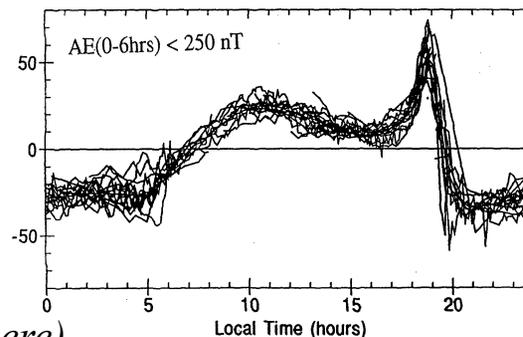
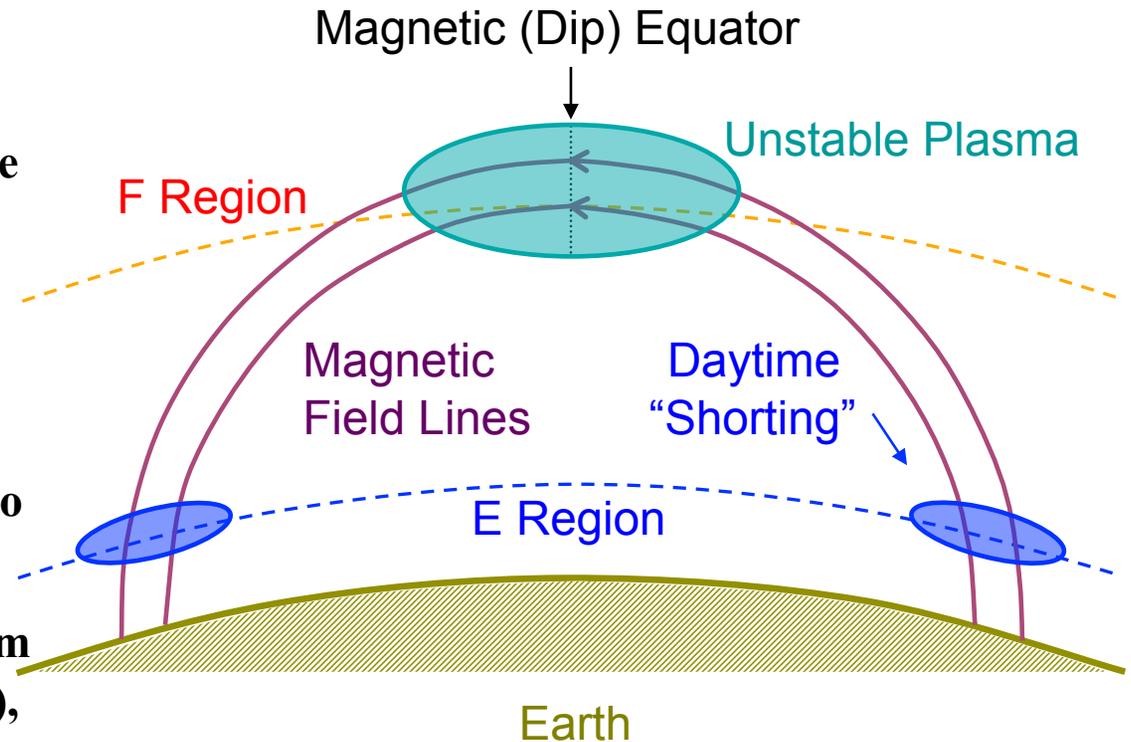
- **ROTI – Rate of TEC index**

- ROT – detrended rate of TEC derived from dual-frequency phase data
- ROT data sampled at 30 sec (or 1 s)
- Not susceptible to local oscillator errors, in principle

*Courtesy: Pi at JPL*

# Equatorial Plasma Bubbles

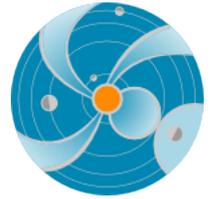
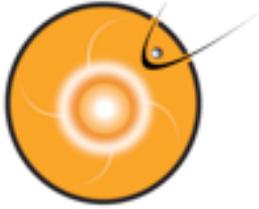
- Plasma moves easily along field lines
- Upward plasma drift supports plasma against gravity  $\Rightarrow$  unstable configuration
- E-region “shorts out” electrodynamic instability during day
- At night, E-region conductivity too small to short-out E field
- Instability in plasma grows to form equatorial plasma bubbles (EPBs), which contain irregularities seen by radars (right image) & which disrupt communications
- Irregularities mainly present during quiet times



(Courtesy: de la beaujardiere)

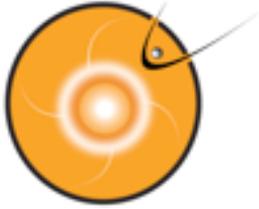
# Ionosphere Irregularities

- plasma bubbles: typical east–west dimensions of several hundred kilometers contain irregularities with scale-lengths ranging from tens of kilometers to tens of centimeters ( Woodman and Tsunoda). Basu et al. (1978) showed that between sunset and midnight, 3-m scale irregularities that cause radar backscatter at 50 MHz, co-exist with sub-kilometer scale irregularities that cause VHF and L-band scintillations. After midnight, however, the radar backscatter and L-band scintillations decay but VHF scintillations caused by km-scale irregularities persist for several hours.

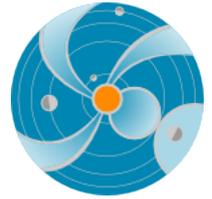


# Spacecraft Drag

- Spacecraft in LEO experience periods of increased drag that causes them to slow, lose altitude and finally reenter the atmosphere. Short-term drag effects are generally felt by spacecraft  $<1,000$  km altitude.
- Drag increase is well correlated with solar Ultraviolet (UV) output and additional atmospheric heating that occurs during geomagnetic storms.
- Most drag models use radio flux at 10.7 cm wavelength as a proxy for solar UV flux.  $K_p$  is the index commonly used as a surrogate for short-term atmospheric heating due to geomagnetic storms. In general, 10.7 cm flux  $>250$  solar flux units and  $K_p \geq 6$  result in detectably increased drag on LEO spacecraft.
- Very high UV/10.7 cm flux and  $K_p$  values can result in extreme short-term increases in drag. During the great geomagnetic storm of 13-14 March 1989, tracking of thousands of space objects was lost. One LEO satellite lost over 30 kilometers of altitude, and hence significant lifetime, during this storm.



# Satellite Drag



- Atmospheric drag magnitude:

$\beta = \frac{c_D A}{m}$  is ballistic coefficient  
 $\rho$  is atmospheric density

$$a_{drag} = \frac{1}{2} \beta \rho v^2$$

$$v \cong v_{sat}$$

**Solar cycle and space weather have strong impact on neutral atmospheric density**

**Increasing atmospheric drag impacts:**

**Frequency of “Drag Make-Up” maneuvers for satellite to stay in control box**

**Covariance**

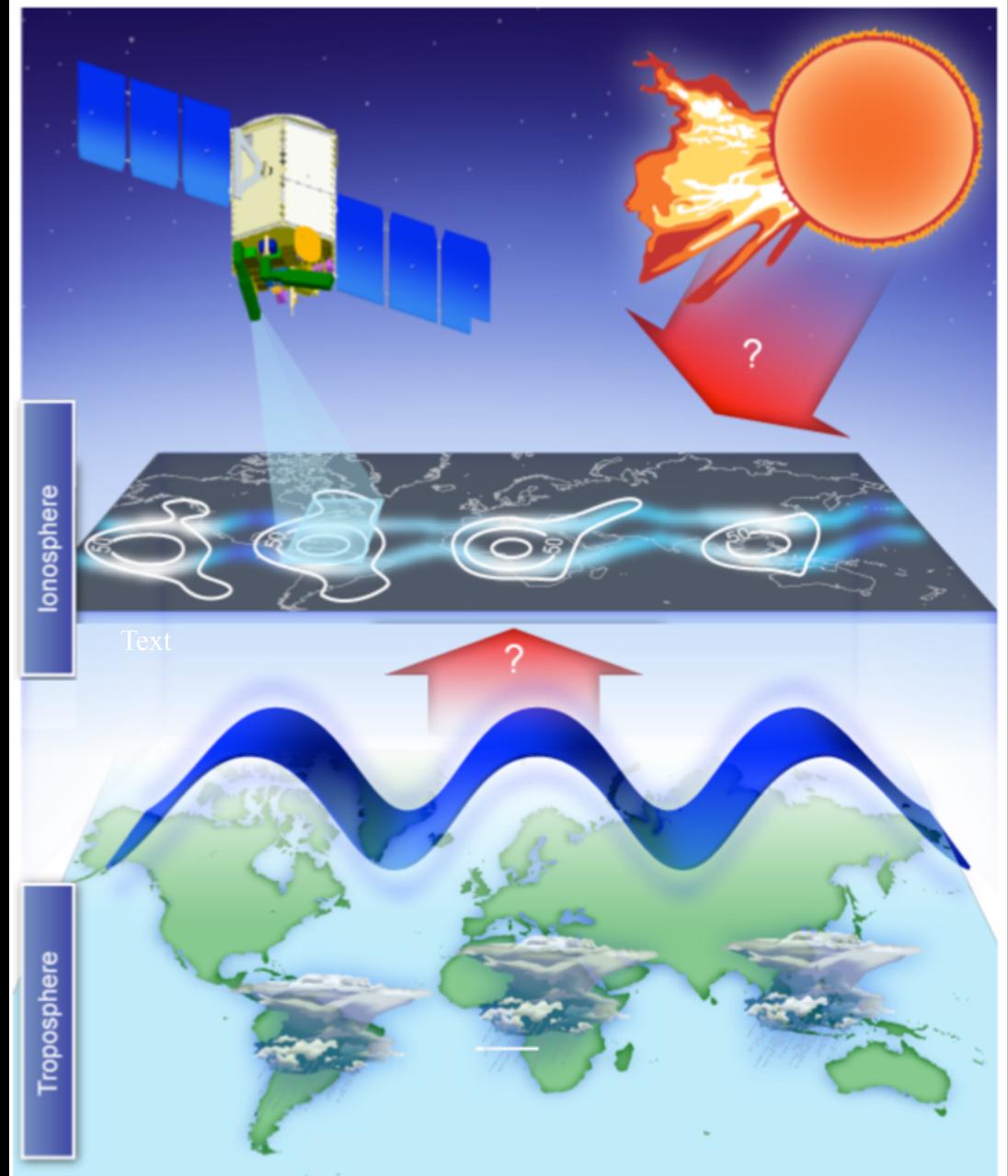
**Uncertainty in predicted atmospheric drag impacts:**

**Future satellite position predictions**

The ionosphere is the densest plasma between the Earth and Sun, and is traditionally believed to be mainly influenced by forcing from **above** (solar radiation, solar wind/ magnetosphere)

Recent scientific results show that the ionosphere is strongly influenced by forces acting from **below**.

**Research remains to be done:  
How competing influences from above and below shape our space environment.**



Courtesy: ICON

# iSWA layout for ionosphere products

[http://bit.ly/iono\\_layout](http://bit.ly/iono_layout)