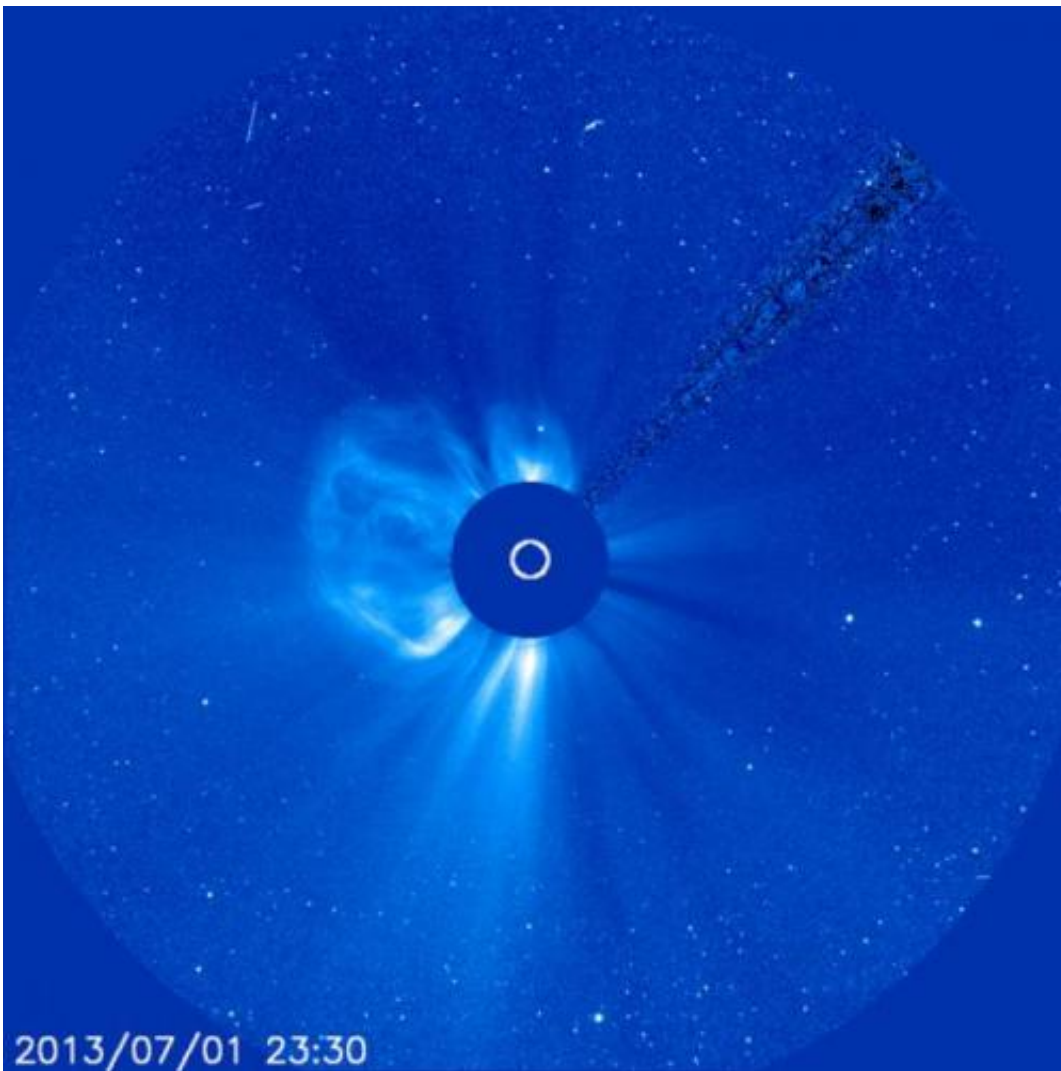


Coronal mass ejection headed toward Mercury and Venus

July 2 2013, by Karen C. Fox



On July 1, 2013, the sun erupted with a coronal mass ejection, or CME -- shown here as the lighter-colored gas moving off to the left -- which soared off in the direction of Venus and Mars. This image was captured by the joint ESA/NASA Solar and Heliospheric Observatory. Credit: ESA and NASA/SOHO

On July 1, 2013, at 6:09 p.m. EDT, the sun erupted with a coronal mass ejection, or CME, a solar phenomenon that can send billions of tons of solar particles into space that can affect electronic systems in satellites. Experimental NASA research models based on NASA's Solar Terrestrial Relations Observatory show that the CME was not Earth-directed and it left the sun at around 570 miles per second.

The CME may, however, pass by NASA's Messenger, Spitzer and STEREO-B satellites, and their mission operators have been notified. There is only very slight particle radiation associated with this event, which is what would normally concern operators of interplanetary spacecraft, because the particles can trip computer electronics aboard interplanetary spacecraft. If warranted, operators can put spacecraft into safe mode to protect the instruments from the solar material.

[NOAA's Space Weather Prediction Center](#) is the U.S. government's official source for space weather forecasts, alerts, watches and warnings.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

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