WASHINGTON, D. C. -- NASA Administrator James E. Webb today named the successfully launched atmospheric density satellite Explorer IX. The 12-foot inflatable sphere was launched by a Scout rocket from Wallops Station, Va., at 8:05 a.m. EST February 16, 1961.

Project officials confirmed this afternoon that the sphere achieved orbit on the basis of visual and photographic sightings by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory tracking network and on radar observation by the Millstone Hill, Mass., facility of the M.I.T. Lincoln Laboratory.

Project officials confirmed yesterday that the burned out fourth stage rocket casing of the Scout had been injected into orbit. NASA minitrack stations are receiving signals from its tracking beacon. Its latest reported orbital elements are:

- Apogee: 1,604 statute miles
- Perigee: 404 statute miles
- Period: 118.552 minutes
- Inclination: 38.9°

The beacon on the sphere is not operating. SAO has determined that the sphere is in about the same orbit as the rocket casing. Observations by the Millstone Hill radar show that the sphere is inflated and research scientists at Langley Research Center, Va. under direction of William J. O'Sullivan, Jr. are proceeding with their air density experiments using optical sighting data.
Due to the inclination of the orbit and its relationship to the sun, the sphere will be visible in the United States only during early morning hours and in the southern hemisphere during evening hours. This will continue for at least several weeks. It will not be seen above a latitude of 45° north. It will have a brightness of a star of the fourth magnitude.

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