Lightning Imaging Sensor (LIS) for the International Space Station (ISS): Mission Description and Science Goals

Presented by

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Lightning Imaging Sensor (LIS) on ISS

**Mission Overview**

- NASA and UAH developed space-based lightning observation as a remote sensing tool under the Earth Observing System (EOS) and Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission (TRMM) (*LIS still operational on TRMM*).
- LIS on the ISS will extend TRMM time series observations, expand latitudinal coverage, and provide real time observations in support of important and pressing science and applications objectives.
- Integrate as hosted payload on DoD Space Test Program (STP-H5) and launch on SpaceX Dragon in February 2016 for 2 year mission.

**Measurement**

- LIS measures global lightning (*amount, rate, radiant energy*) during both day and night, with storm scale resolution, millisecond timing, and high, uniform detection efficiency.
  - LIS daytime detection is both unique and scientifically important (>70% occurs during day).
  - Only LIS globally detects TOTAL (*both cloud and ground*) lightning with no land-ocean bias.

**Need and Benefit**

- Lightning is quantitatively coupled to both thunderstorm and related geophysical processes.
- Therefore lightning observations provide important gap-filling inputs to pressing Earth system sciences issues in a wide range of disciplines (e.g., *weather, climate, atmospheric chemistry, lightning physics*).
- Real time observations will be provided to operational users.
- LIS data is the “Gold Standard” for global lightning climatology.
LIS Flight Heritage

- ISS LIS built upon a solid foundation of on-orbit observations.
- Key LIS scientists, engineers, and facilities still in place.

**Optical Transient Detector**
- Launched: April 1995
- Data: May 1995 - April 2000
- Orbit: 70° inclin., 735 km (detects to ~75°)
- Field of view: 1250x1250 km
- Diurnal cycle: sampled in 55 days

**Lightning Imaging Sensor**
- Launched: November 1997
- Data: Jan. 1998 - present
- Orbit: 35° inclin., 350 km (boosted to 400 km in 2001) (detects to ~38°)
- Field of view: 600 x 600 km
- Diurnal cycle: sampled in 49 days
**Lightning from Space:** Lightning appears like a pool of light on the top of the cloud as the discharge lights up the cloud like a light bulb.

**Daytime Challenge:** During day, sunlight reflected from cloud top totally “swamps out” and masks the lightning signal. Daytime lightning detection drove the design.

**Solution:** Special techniques must be applied to extract the weak, transient lightning signal from the bright, background noise.

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### Spatial
Optimal sampling of lightning scene relative to background scene.
- Pixel field-of-view 4-10 km.

### Spectral
Optimal sampling of lightning signal relative to background signal.
- LIS uses 1nm filter at 777.4 nm.

### Temporal
Optimal sampling of lightning pulse relative to background signal.
- LIS uses 2 ms frame rate.

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- Even with spatial, spectral and temporal filters, background can exceed lightning signal by 100 to 1 at the focal plane.
- The final step is a frame-by-frame background subtraction to produce a lightning only signal.
- Filtering results in $10^5$ reduction in data rate requirements while maintaining high detection efficiency for lightning.

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**Background Subtraction**
Optimal subtraction of background signal levels at each pixel.

- Transient events selected for processing.
LIS Hardware

**LIS Sensor Unit**
Optical Assembly
128x128 CCD Focal Plane

**Electronics Unit**
Real Time Event Processor
Control & Data Handling (C&DH)
Power conversion and control

**Interface Unit (new)**
1 PPS Time Signal Generation
C&DH Formatting
ISS Interface

**LIS Performance Parameters**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field-of-View (FOV)</td>
<td>$80^\circ \times 80^\circ$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pixel IFOV (nadir)</td>
<td>4 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interference Filter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wavelength</td>
<td>777.4 nm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bandwidth</td>
<td>1 nm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detection Threshold</td>
<td>4.7 $\mu$J m$^{-2}$sr$^{-1}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signal to Noise Ratio</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCD Array Size</td>
<td>$128 \times 128$ pixels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic Range</td>
<td>&gt; 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detection Efficiency</td>
<td>$70 - 90%$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Event Rate</td>
<td>$&lt; 5%$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measurement Accuracy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>location</td>
<td>1 pixel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intensity</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>tag at frame rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensor assembly</td>
<td>$20 \times 37$ cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>electronics assembly</td>
<td>$31 \times 22 \times 27$ cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>20 kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>30 Watts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telemetry</td>
<td>data rate, format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 kb/s, PCM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIS Integration on STP-H5 as Hosted Payload

• LIS is one of thirteen instruments on the STP-H5 payload manifest.
• LIS will be installed on ISS in a Earth (nadir) viewing position.
LIS Launch, Installation and Operation on ISS

- Launched to ISS on a Space X rocket with Dragon cargo vehicle in February 2016.
- Payload will be robotically installed on ISS.
  - Installed on Express Logistics Carrier-1 (ELC-1)
- LIS will be operated for a minimum of 2 years.
  - Mission extension will be sought from NASA
Science and Applications from Lightning

Why Lightning Matters

**Weather:** Total lightning is strongly coupled in a quantitative way to thunderstorm processes and responds to updraft velocity and cloud particles (concentration, phase, type, and flux).
- LIS acts like a radar in space: it reveals the heart of the cloud.
- Lightning can improve convective precipitation estimates.
- Lightning is strongly coupled to severe weather hazards (winds, floods, tornadoes, hail, wild fires) and can improve forecast models.

**Climate:** Lightning is an excellent variable for climate monitoring because it is sensitive to small changes in temperature and atmospheric forcing. ISS LIS will:
- Extend 16 year time series of TRMM LIS, expand to higher latitudes.
- Monitor the occurrence and changes in extreme storms.
- Provide much desired cross-sensor calibrations between platforms.

**Chemistry:** ISS LIS will help improve estimates of lightning produced NO\(_x\) for climate and air quality studies.
- Lightning NO\(_x\) also impacts ozone, an important green house gas.
- Climate most sensitive to ozone in upper troposphere, exactly where lightning is the most important source of NO\(_x\).

**Other:** Complementary ISS LIS observations will help unravel the mechanisms leading to terrestrial gamma-ray flashes (TGFs) and Transient Luminous Events (TLEs).
Unique Science Contributions from ISS Platform

“New and Improved” Science

- Higher latitude lightning coverage
  - TRMM LIS misses up to 30% lightning in N. Hemisphere summer
  - Enhance regional and global weather, climate, and chemistry studies
  - Provide CONUS coverage (needed for National Climate Assessment)

- Real time lightning using ISS Low Rate Telemetry (LRT)
  - Desired by SMD and strongly endorsed by NOAA partners
    (partners include: NWS Pacific Region, Joint Typhoon Warning Center, Ocean Prediction Center, Aviation Weather Center, and National Hurricane Center)
  - Provide real time lightning for data sparse regions, especially oceans
    (storm warnings, nowcasts, oceanic aviation and international SIGMETs, long-range lightning system validation, hurricane rapid intensification evaluations)

- Simultaneous / complementary LIS observations
  - Provide critical daytime lightning to better understand mechanisms leading to TGFs and TLEs (strongly endorsed by ESA ASIM and JAXA GLIMS)

- Cross-sensor calibration
  - Inter-calibrate ISS LIS, TRMM LIS, GOES-R GLM and MTG LI for improved science and applications (strongly endorsed by NOAA and ESA)
# Timeline of ISS LIS and Related Space Missions

**Blue:** LIS observations or LIS science enabling contributions  
**Red:** related mission observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1995-1999</th>
<th>2000-2029</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'95 '96 '97 '98 '99 '00 '01 '02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07 '08 '09 '10 '11 '12 '13 '14 '15 '16 '17 '18 '19 '20 '21 '22 '23 '24 '25 '26 '27 '28 '29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OTD**  
4/1995  
5/2000  
**Cross calibration obtained between OTD and TRMM LIS**

**TRMM LIS**  
11/1997  
**Estimated end of operations 2/2015 through 2018**

**ISS LIS**  
**LIS:** day/night lightning, storm scale resolution (4km), millisecond timing, high, uniform detection, calibrated radiance from 128x128 CCD.

**Taranis**  
Taranis: TGF, TLE, optical photometers, LF, HF, magnetic field

**ISS LIS:** coincident lightning location, calibrated radiance (cross calibration possibility)

**GOES-R GLM**  
GLM: optical lightning similar to LIS (LIS heritage)

**ISS LIS:** proxy data, cal/val support, desire ISS LIS cross calibration for climate monitoring

**JAXA GLIMS**  
GLIMS: VHF, optical photometers

**ISS LIS:** coincident **daytime** lightning location, calibrated radiance

**ESA ASIM**  
ASIM: TGF, video cameras, optical photometers

**ISS LIS:** coincident **daytime** lightning location, calibrated radiance

**Launch Date early 2016**

(2 year minimum)

**Launch Date 2016**

(2 -3 year mission)

**Planned launch date**

late 2015 to early 2016

**Mission end ?**

**Launch Date 2016**

(mission duration ?)

**Desire cross calibration with ISS LIS for continuity in climate monitoring.**
Established User Community and Infrastructure

• Large and established LIS science users community
  – Insures the ISS LIS observations will be immediately applied to pressing Earth system science issues through innovative, integrated, hypothesis or science question-driven approaches.
  – The expanded ISS LIS coverage and real time access will lead to new and expanded science and application investigations

• Established processing, archival, and distribution system
  – Leverage TRMM LIS infrastructure to quickly get ISS LIS data into the hands of science and application users (fully ready prior to launch).
  – Ready to provide tracking of data usage for ISS Project reporting.
  – Ready at launch to deliver real time LIS data to NOAA and other users.

• LIS data used extensively by the international science community
  – Data used across multiple disciplines including weather/precipitation, climate, chemistry, and thunderstorm/space connections.
  – Since 1997, over 50 peer-reviewed publications and over 40 advanced degrees awarded that used OTD/LIS data. Data used by scientist in more than 40 countries.

• LIS data is the “Gold Standard” for global lightning climatology
LIS Data Flow & Processing Overview

LIS Payload Operations Control Center (POCC)

- Instrument commands
- L0 Raw data (science, housekeeping, ephemeris)

Huntsville Operations Support Center (HOSC)

- Real Time L2 Science data
- L2 Science data & backgrounds
- L3 Science products
- QC Info
- L2/L3 Science data & imagery

GHRC Archive

- L0 Raw data
- L2 Science data & backgrounds
- L3 Products
- Browse Images

GHRC Web/FTP

- L2 Science data & backgrounds
- L3 Products
- Browse Images

Operational Users

LIS Science Team

Science User Community
Project Status and Milestones

☑ April 2013: LIS selected as ISS payload.
☑ December 2013: System Requirements Review/Preliminary Design Review successfully completed.
☑ April 2014: Critical Design Review successfully completed.
☐ January 2015: Deliver LIS to Space Test Program (STP) for integration on STP-H5.
☐ August 2015: Deliver STP-H5 to Kennedy Space Center for launch vehicle integration and test.
☐ February 2016: Launch to ISS on SpaceX 10 using Dragon Cargo vehicle.
☐ February 2016: Mission operations begin after short checkout.
Thank You!
ISS LIS Scientific Justification Summary

Strong scientific rationale exists for ISS accommodation

• ISS LIS well aligned with multiple NASA themes.
  – NASA Earth Science Focus Areas (4 of 6), National Research Council Decadal Survey Climate Studies, Space Science (Earth/Space connection).
  – Supports TRMM LIS and the Global Precipitation Mission (GPM).

• Supports multiple high value science activities and objectives.
  – ISS LIS supports on-going and future research missions both as a stand alone mission and through key complementary observations.
  – Immediate science and applications returns anticipated due to large, established LIS science users community and data processing/distribution infrastructure.

• Supports interagency and international collaborations.
  – NOAA for cross sensor validation for the Geostationary Lightning Mapper (GLM) launched aboard the GOES-R in 2015 and real time operational users
  – Significantly enhances science return of ESA’s Atmosphere-Space Interaction Monitor (ASIM) and JAXA’s Global Lightning and sprite MeasurementS (GLIMS) experiments. Also cross validation of ESA’s geostationary Lightning Imager (LI)