

CRAVE Flight Summary Report for January, 14, 2006.

The transit flight from Houston to San Jose, Costa Rica was very successful. The WB-57F took off at about 11:11 AM CST and headed south/southeastward towards the Yucatan Straits between Cuba and Mexico at a flight altitude of about 53 kft (16.1 km). Over the straits, the plane turned southward and flew to about 11.75N. During this leg, the plane did a slow ascent and descent between 53 and 61 kft. The plane then turned southwestward towards San Jose. After reaching San Jose, the plane did a slow spiral descent to a landing at approximately 4 PM.

During the flight down, temperatures fell to 186 K (-125 F). A thin layer of subvisible cirrus (SVC) was observed by the pilot (Andy Roberts) and science instrument operator (John Bain). They slowly profiled through this air during the transit. CAPS data indicated two thin cirrus layers in the tropopause region. A water-vapor/ozonesonde was launched from a location near San Jose just prior to the beginning of the spiral descent over San Jose.

Attached is a photo of the subvisible cirrus (SVC) taken by John Bain from the WB-57F. This SVC layer was located at an altitude of approximately 56 kft (17 km). Andy Roberts and John Bain both reported that the SVC could be seen over an extensive region of the Caribbean south of the Yucatan Straits.

The C-5a arrived in San Jose shortly after the WB-57F landed, with all of our equipment and about 40 team members.