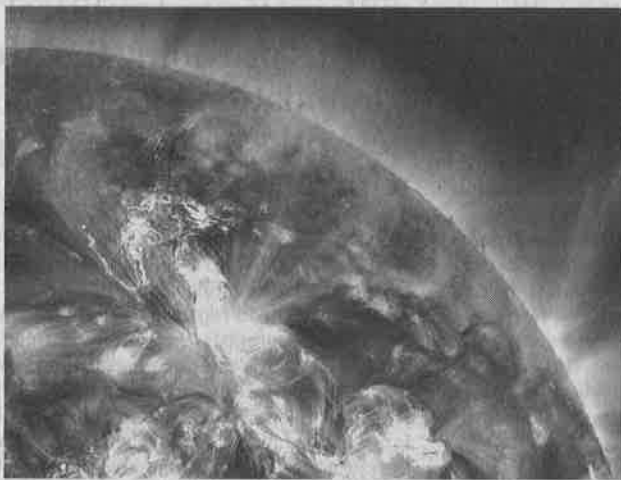


# Strong solar flare making its way towards Earth

**WASHINGTON** A strong solar flare is blasting its way to Earth, but the worst of its power looks like it will barely skim above the planet and not cause many problems.

It has been several years since Earth has had a solar storm of this size coming from sunspots smack in the middle of the sun, said Tom Berger, director of the Space Weather Prediction Centre in Boulder, Colorado, U.S. The flare on the sun barely hits the “extreme” on forecasters’ scale, but with its worst effects missing Earth it is only looking “potentially strong” at most when it arrives at Earth as a solar storm, he said.

So while the power grid may see fluctuations because the storm will cause changes in Earth’s magnetic field, it won’t knock power systems off line, Mr. Berger said. It



*Picture of a solar flare erupting on the Sun's northeastern hemisphere. – FILE PHOTO: AP*

may cause slight disturbances in satellites and radio transmissions but nothing major.

The storm is moving medium fast, about 2.5 million

mph (4.02 million km/hr), meaning the soonest it could arrive is early Friday. But it could be later, Mr. Berger said.— AP