

ISS Expedition 15 Crew to Launch from Baikonur

April 3 2007



Attired in Russian Sokol launch and entry suits, spaceflight participant Charles Simonyi (left) and cosmonauts Oleg Kotov (center) and Fyodor Yurchikhin (right) join hands as they pose for a portrait in Star City, Russia. Photo credit: Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center

Commander Fyodor Yurchikhin and cosmonaut Oleg Kotov of the 15th International Space Station crew are scheduled to launch from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan at about 1:30 p.m. EDT on April 7 to begin a six-month stay in space.

With them will be Spaceflight Participant Charles Simonyi. He is an American flying under contract with the Russian Federal Space Agency.

He will return to Earth with Expedition 14 crew members, Commander

Michael Lopez-Alegria and Flight Engineer Mikhail Tyurin, on April 20. Expedition 14 launched to the station last Sept. 20.

After its April 7 launch, Expedition 15's Soyuz TMA-10 spacecraft is scheduled to dock at the station a little after 3 p.m. on April 9.

There they will be greeted by their third Expedition 15 crew member, astronaut Sunita Williams. She launched to the station aboard the STS-116 mission of Discovery on Dec. 9 and arrived at the station Dec. 11. She joined Expedition 14 in progress and will provide Expedition 15 with an experienced flight engineer for the early part of its increment.

Williams, 42, is a Naval Academy graduate and a Navy commander. She flew helicopters and was a helicopter test pilot before being selected as an astronaut in 1998.

Yurchikhin, 48, will be making his second flight into space. He was a member of the STS-112 crew which launched to the station on Oct. 7, 2002, with the Starboard 1 Truss. He holds a Ph.D. in economics and was named a cosmonaut-candidate in 1997.

Kotov, 41, is making his first spaceflight. He graduated from the Moscow Medical Academy in 1988, and was named a cosmonaut-candidate in 1996.

Astronaut Clayton Anderson is scheduled to replace Williams as a flight engineer during Expedition 15. Anderson, 48, holds a master's degree in aerospace engineering from Iowa State University. He was selected as an astronaut in 1998 and will be making his first spaceflight.

Two Expedition 16 crew members are expected to arrive next fall to replace Yurchikhin and Kotov.

Source: NASA

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