

Station Crew Prepares for Thursday Spacewalk

July 8 2008



The International Space Station flies over Hurricane Bertha on Tuesday. Credit: NASA TV

The Expedition 17 crew of the International Space Station worked Tuesday towards completing preparations for a pair of spacewalks. They donned their spacesuits for a dry run and inspected hatch seals.

Commander Sergei Volkov and Flight Engineer Oleg Kononenko put on their Orlan spacesuits in a full dress rehearsal of Thursday's spacewalk. The two cosmonauts tested their ability to move around and the status of the suits' communication gear and other systems.

Meanwhile, Flight Engineer Greg Chamitoff inspected the hatch seals of

the station's labs and checked out the communication equipment in the docked Soyuz TMA-12 spacecraft. During the spacewalks, the station's hatches will be sealed and Chamitoff will remain in the Soyuz as a contingency in the unlikely event that the spacewalkers are unable to repressurize the Pirs docking compartment and must use the Soyuz to move to another docking port to re-enter the station.

Volkov and Kononenko are set to exit the station Thursday at about 2:20 p.m. EDT. During the 6-hour excursion, they will inspect the Soyuz, checking the attachment of the return module to the propulsion module. They also will retrieve a suspect pyrotechnic bolt for inspection by engineers on the ground.

If time permits, the spacewalkers will install a docking target on the Zvezda service module. Otherwise, they will complete that task on a second spacewalk on July 15. On that spacewalk they also will retrieve an experiment from the station's exterior and install another.

Source: NASA

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