

Chinese space debris passes shuttle uneventfully: NASA

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A small piece of debris from China's 2007 anti-satellite test passed by the space shuttle Atlantis, but not close enough to require an evasive maneuver, NASA said Wednesday.

"No action was required," said Pat Ryan, a US space agency spokesman in Mission Control.

The 10-centimeter-long (four-inch) object, which was being tracked by the Pentagon, was projected to pass within three kilometers (1.8 miles) of Atlantis and its crew of seven astronauts about 0030 GMT Thursday.

Shuttle commander Scott Altman and his six fellow astronauts were told of the close pass and to be ready to maneuver out of its way, but that turned out not to be necessary.

The Atlantis crew captured the Hubble [Space](#) Telescope earlier Wednesday and hoisted the 19-year-old observatory into the shuttle's cargo bay for an overhaul by spacewalking astronauts.

LeRoy Cain, who chairs NASA's mission management team, said Atlantis could maneuver gently if necessary without damaging the 13.2 meter (43 feet) long telescope.

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