

Space crews say goodbye, shuttle departing Tuesday

September 8 2009, By MARCIA DUNN , AP Aerospace Writer



In this image made from video provided by NASA astronaut John "Danny" Olivas, STS-128 mission specialist, center left, shakes hands and thanks the commander of the space station Russia's Federal Space Agency cosmonaut Gennady Padalka before the hatches between the orbiting shuttle and station close Monday Sept. 7, 2009. The shuttle will undock Tuesday. (AP Photo/NASA)

(AP) -- The farewell hugs and handshakes are over. Now all that's left for the crews of the space shuttle and space station is the release of the docking latches.

Discovery will pull away from the [international space station](#) Tuesday afternoon, ending a resupply visit that spanned just over a week. The shuttle will bring home seven astronauts and a Buzz Lightyear doll that was launched last year.

The hatches between the spacecraft were closed late Monday.

NASA, meanwhile, is eyeing another piece of [space junk](#), this one a Chinese satellite fragment that could come too close to the space station Wednesday. It's part of a satellite that was blasted by a missile in 2007. Officials say the outpost probably will not need to steer clear.

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