

Soyuz carrying Americans, Russian lands

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U.S. astronaut Doug Wheelock shows a sign after landing near the town of Arkalyk in northern Kazakhstan, Friday, Nov. 26, 2010. The Soyuz capsule carrying Russian Fyodor Yurchikhin and NASA's Doug Wheelock and Shannon Walker back to Earth from the International Space Station landed safely in Kazakhstan on Friday. (AP Photo/Shamil Zhumatov, pool)

(AP) -- A Soyuz spacecraft carrying two Americans and a Russian from the International Space Station touched down Friday in Kazakhstan in a landing that the Russian space program's chief described as ideal.

The Russian capsule carrying [cosmonaut](#) Fyodor Yurchikhin and astronauts Shannon Walker and Douglas Wheelock landed in the sprawling steppes of the Central Asian nation about 3 1/2 hours after separating from the space station. The landing was close to its target point, said Roscosmos head Anatoly Perminov.

In some Soyuz landings, the capsule hanging from parachutes drifts far from the target point, but Friday's landing was within 1.5 kilometers (1 mile).

"It was the ideal scenario," Perminov was quoted as saying by the ITAR-Tass news agency.

Video from the site showed the capsule, blackened by the intense heat of re-entry, lying on its side as the space fliers were extracted, still strapped into their seats. They appeared happy, but typically moved their hands slowly as they adjusted to gravity after five months of floating free in space.

"The condition of the crew is completely satisfactory - blood pressure, pulse, oxygen are all in the allowable limits," Vyacheslav Rogozhnikov of the Institute of Medical-Biological Problems said at Russian mission control just outside Moscow, according to ITAR-Tass.

The [landing](#) took place four days earlier than initially planned because Kazakh officials have requested air space be kept clear for the Dec. 1-2 summit by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Three crew members remain on the space station - American Scott Kelly and Russians Alexander Kaleri and Oleg Skripochka. The blasted off in early October for a five-month mission.

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