

Soyuz capsule returns from space station

September 11 2013



Expedition 36 Flight Engineer Chris Cassidy of NASA is carried to the medical tent shortly after he and, Commander Pavel Vinogradov of Russian Federal Space Agency (Roscosmos), and Flight Engineer Alexander Misurkin of Roscosmos landed in their Soyuz capsule in a remote area near the town of Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, on Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013. Vinogradov, Misurkin and Cassidy returned to Earth after 166 days on the International Space Station. (AP Photo/NASA, Bill Ingalls)

A Soyuz capsule carrying three astronauts touched down to Earth early on Wednesday morning after undocking from the International Space Station following 166 days in space.

American Chris Cassidy and Russians Pavel Vinogradov and Alexander Misurkin emerged from the [capsule](#) in smiles on an unusually sunny day in Kazakhstan.

Live coverage from NASA, the U.S. space agency, first showed the shuttle parachuting to a safe and punctual landing. Helicopters were then flown to the landing site, where medical and flight crews helped the three men disembark.

The capsule undocked from the [space station](#) for a flight to Earth that took just over three hours. The three men blasted off from the Baikonur cosmodrome on March 29.

Each of the men was carried to reclining chairs, where they spent several minutes in order to acclimatize to Earth's gravity.

A NASA TV commentator said that crew members Misurkin and Cassidy would be taken to a medical center, where they will undergo various tests that could provide information for future flights.

Vinogradov, at 60 the oldest human ever to land in a Soyuz vehicle, would not take part in the same experiments.



The Soyuz spacecraft with Expedition 36 Commander Pavel Vinogradov of the Russian Federal Space Agency (Roscosmos), Flight Engineer Alexander Misurkin of Roscosmos and Flight Engineer Chris Cassidy of NASA aboard, is seen as it lands in a remote area near the town of Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, on Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013. Vinogradov, Misurkin and Cassidy returned to Earth after 166 days on the International Space Station. (AP Photo/NASA, Bill Ingalls)

Currently the Russian Fyodor Yurchikhin, Karen Nyberg of NASA and the Italian Luca Parmitano are tending the International Space Station until the arrival of a three-person crew scheduled to launch from Kazakhstan on Sept. 25.

The Soyuz is the only means for international astronauts to reach the orbiting laboratory since the decommissioning of the U.S. shuttle fleet in 2011.



Expedition 36 Flight Engineer Chris Cassidy of NASA, left, Commander Pavel Vinogradov of the Russian Federal Space Agency (Roscosmos), center, and, Flight Engineer Alexander Misurkin of Roscosmos, sit in chairs outside the Soyuz capsule just minutes after they landed in a remote area near the town of Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, on Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013. Vinogradov, Misurkin and Cassidy returned to Earth after 166 days on the International Space Station. (AP Photo/NASA, Bill Ingalls)



The Soyuz spacecraft with NASA's Chris Cassidy and Russians Pavel Vinogradov and Alexander Misurkin is seen as it lands in a remote area near the town of Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013. The Soyuz capsule carrying three astronauts has touched down on Earth after undocking from the International Space Station after 166 days in space. (AP Photo/Maxim Shipenkov)



The Soyuz spacecraft with NASA's Chris Cassidy and Russians Pavel Vinogradov and Alexander Misurkin lands near the town of Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013. The Soyuz capsule carrying three astronauts has touched down on Earth after undocking from the International Space Station after 166 days in space.(AP Photo/Maxim Shipenkov, Pool)



NASA's Chris Cassidy, left, Russians Pavel Vinogradov, center, and, Alexander Misurkin sit in chairs outside the Soyuz capsule just minutes after they landed in a remote area near the town of Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013. The Soyuz capsule carrying three astronauts has touched down on Earth after undocking from the International Space Station after 166 days in space. (AP Photo/Maxim Shipenkov, Pool)



U.S. astronaut Chris Cassidy speaks on a satellite phone shortly after the Soyuz capsule carrying Cassidy and other astronauts has touched down on Earth after undocking from the International Space Station after 166 days in space, in a remote area near the town of Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013. (AP Photo/Maxim Shipenkov, Pool)



Russia's space agency ground personnel help U.S. astronaut Chris Cassidy, center, shortly after the Soyuz capsule carrying Cassidy and other astronauts has touched down on Earth after undocking from the International Space Station after 166 days in space, in a remote area near the town of Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013. (AP Photo/Maxim Shipenkov, Pool)



In a photo provided by NASA, Russian search and rescue helicopters fly over Kazakhstan, Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2013, from the city of Karaganda to Zhezkazgan a day ahead of the scheduled landing of the Soyuz TMA-08M spacecraft with Expedition 36 Commander Pavel Vinogradov of the Russian Federal Space Agency (Roscosmos), Flight Engineer Alexander Misurkin of Roscosmos and Flight Engineer Chris Cassidy. Vinogradov, Misurkin and Cassidy are returning to Earth after five and a half months on the International Space Station. (AP Photo/NASA, Bill Ingalls)



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