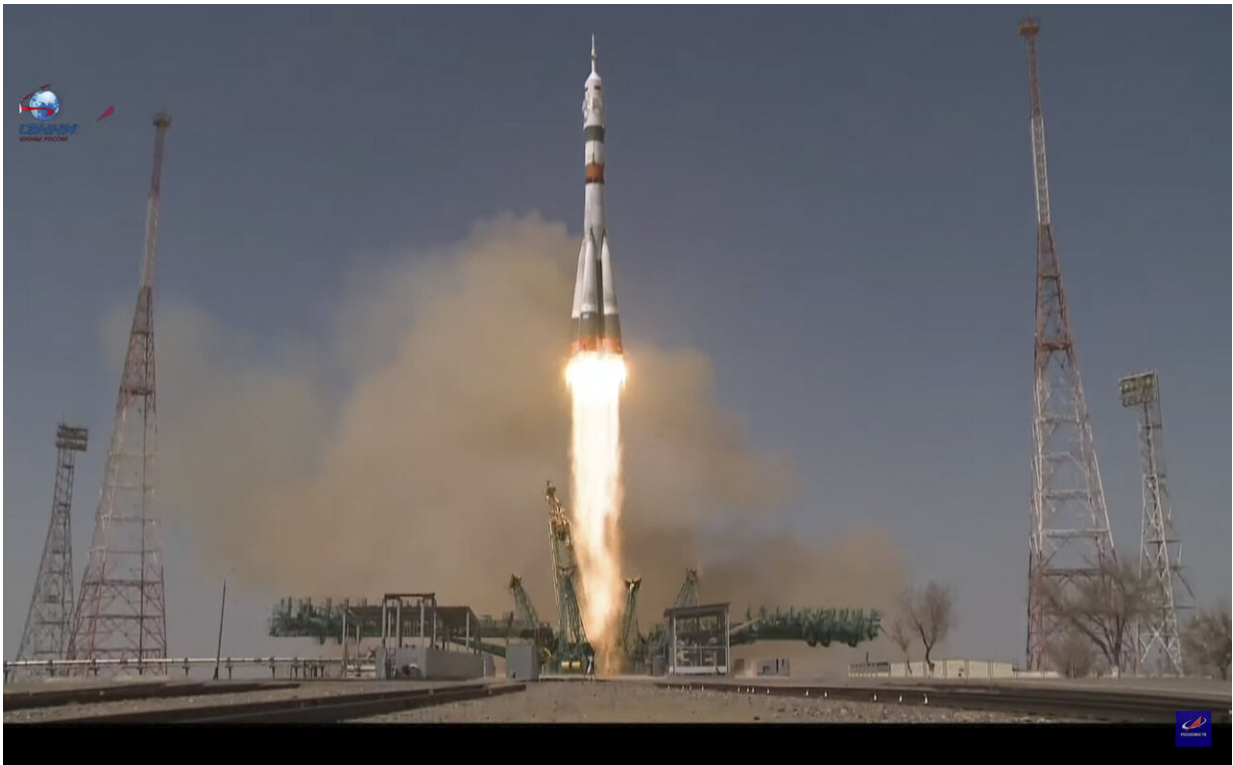


American, Russians dock at International Space Station

April 9 2021, by Vladimir Isachenkov



In this photo taken from video footage released by the Roscosmos Space Agency, the Soyuz-2.1a rocket booster with Soyuz MS-18 space ship carrying a new crew to the International Space Station, ISS, blasts off at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Friday, April 9, 2021. A Russian-U.S. trio of space travelers have launched successfully, heading for the International Space Station. NASA astronaut Mark Vande Hei and Russian cosmonauts Oleg Novitskiy and Pyotr Dubrov blasted off as scheduled at 12:42 p.m. (0742 GMT, 3:42 a.m. EDT) Friday aboard the Soyuz MS-18 spacecraft from the Russia-leased Baikonur launch facility in Kazakhstan. (Roscosmos Space Agency via

AP)

A trio of Russian and American space travelers launched successfully and reached the International Space Station on Friday.

NASA astronaut Mark Vande Hei and Russian cosmonauts Oleg Novitskiy and Pyotr Dubrov blasted off as scheduled at 12:42 p.m. (0742 GMT, 3:42 a.m. EDT) aboard the Soyuz MS-18 spacecraft from the Russia-leased Baikonur launch facility in Kazakhstan.

They docked at the station after a two-orbit journey that lasted just over three hours.

It is the second [space](#) mission for Vande Hei and the third for Novitskiy, while Dubrov is on his [first mission](#).

The launch came three days before the 60th anniversary of the first human flight to space by Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin and the 40th anniversary of the first launch of NASA's [space shuttle](#).

"When we started, we were competing with each other and that was one of the reasons we were so successful at the beginning of human space flight," Vande Hei said at a pre-flight news conference Thursday. "And as time went on, we realized that by working together we can achieve even more. And of course, that's continuing to this day and I hope that it will continue into the future."



In this image provided by NASA, from left, U.S. astronaut Mark Vande Hei, Russian cosmonauts Oleg Novitskiy and Pyotr Dubrov, members of the main crew to the International Space Station (ISS), attend a news conference in the Baikonur Cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Thursday, April 8, 2021. (Bill Ingalls/NASA via AP)



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In this photo taken from video footage released by the Roscosmos Space Agency, the Soyuz-2.1a rocket booster with Soyuz MS-18 space ship carrying a new crew to the International Space Station, ISS, blasts off at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Friday, April 9, 2021. A Russian-U.S. trio of space travelers have launched successfully, heading for the International Space Station. NASA astronaut Mark Vande Hei and Russian cosmonauts Oleg Novitskiy and Pyotr Dubrov blasted off as scheduled at 12:42 p.m. (0742 GMT, 3:42 a.m. EDT) Friday aboard the Soyuz MS-18 spacecraft from the Russia-leased Baikonur launch facility in Kazakhstan. (Roscosmos Space Agency via AP)



In this photo taken from video footage released by the Roscosmos Space Agency, the Soyuz-2.1a rocket booster with Soyuz MS-18 space ship carrying a new crew to the International Space Station, ISS, flies at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Friday, April 9, 2021. A Russian-U.S. trio of space travelers have launched successfully, heading for the International Space Station. NASA astronaut Mark Vande Hei and Russian cosmonauts Oleg Novitskiy and Pyotr Dubrov blasted off as scheduled at 12:42 p.m. (0742 GMT, 3:42 a.m. EDT) Friday aboard the Soyuz MS-18 spacecraft from the Russia-leased Baikonur launch facility in Kazakhstan. (Roscosmos Space Agency via AP)



In this image provided by NASA, Russian cosmonaut Pyotr Dubrov, top, NASA

astronaut Mark Vande Hei, middle, and Russian cosmonaut Oleg Novitskiy wave farewell prior to boarding the Soyuz MS-18 spacecraft for launch, Friday, April 9, 2021, at the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. The astronaut and cosmonauts are scheduled to launch aboard the Soyuz MS-18 spacecraft Friday, to rendezvous with the International Space Station.(Bill Ingalls/NASA via AP)



In this image provided by NASA, the Soyuz MS-18 rocket is launched with NASA astronaut Mark Vande Hei, Roscosmos cosmonauts Pyotr Dubrov and Oleg Novitskiy, Friday, April 9, 2021, at the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. The Russian-U.S. trio of space travelers launched successfully Friday, heading for the International Space Station. (Bill Ingalls/NASA via AP)



In this photo taken from video footage released by the Roscosmos Space Agency from onboard camera, the Soyuz-2.1a rocket booster with Soyuz MS-18 space ship carrying a new crew to the International Space Station, ISS, flies after the launch from the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Friday, April 9, 2021. A Russian-U.S. trio of space travelers have launched successfully, heading for the International Space Station. NASA astronaut Mark Vande Hei and Russian cosmonauts Oleg Novitskiy and Pyotr Dubrov blasted off as scheduled at 12:42 p.m. (0742 GMT, 3:42 a.m. EDT) Friday aboard the Soyuz MS-18 spacecraft from the Russia-leased Baikonur launch facility in

Kazakhstan. (Roscosmos Space Agency via AP)



In this image provided by NASA, the Soyuz MS-18 rocket is launched with NASA astronaut Mark Vande Hei, Roscosmos cosmonauts Pyotr Dubrov and Oleg Novitskiy, Friday, April 9, 2021, at the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. The Russian-U.S. trio of space travelers launched successfully Friday, heading for the International Space Station.(Bill Ingalls/NASA via AP)



In this image provided by NASA, a fox walks around the Soyuz rocket launch

pad at the Baikonur Cosmodrome launch pad, Thursday, April 8, 2021 in Kazakhstan. Astronaut Mark Vande Hei and cosmonauts Pyotr Dubrov and Oleg Novitskiy are scheduled to launch aboard the Soyuz MS-18 spacecraft Friday, to rendezvous with the International Space Station. (Bill Ingalls/NASA via AP)



In this photo released by the Roscosmos Space Agency, from left, U.S. astronaut Mark Vande Hei, Russian cosmonauts Oleg Novitsky and Pyotr Dubrov, members of the main crew to the International Space Station (ISS), waves near a bus with portraits of the first cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin prior to the launch at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Friday, April 9, 2021. A Russian-U.S. trio of space travelers have launched successfully, heading for the International Space Station. NASA astronaut Mark Vande Hei and Russian cosmonauts Oleg Novitskiy and Pyotr Dubrov blasted off as scheduled at 12:42 p.m. (0742 GMT, 3:42 a.m. EDT) Friday aboard the Soyuz MS-18 spacecraft from the Russia-leased Baikonur launch facility in Kazakhstan. (Roscosmos Space Agency via AP)

The three will work on hundreds of experiments in biology, biotechnology, physical science and Earth science.

On the International Space Station, they are joining NASA's Kate Rubins, Michael Hopkins, Victor Glover and Shannon Walker, Russians Sergey Ryzhikov and Sergey Kud-Sverchkov and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency astronaut Soichi Noguchi.

Rubins, Ryzhikov and Kud-Sverchkov arrived in a Soyuz ship in October; Hopkins, Glover, Walker and Noguchi—the crew of the SpaceX Crew Dragon Resilience—joined them in November.

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