

Space shuttle undocks from space station

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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) -- Space shuttle Discovery has left the international space station.

Discovery undocked from the space station Tuesday afternoon as the two craft soared over China. Its departure ended more than a week of linked flight, in which tons of supplies and equipment were dropped off. The shuttle and its crew of seven are due back on Earth on Thursday.

Six [astronauts](#) were left behind on the orbiting outpost to continue their own lengthy missions.

The two crews embraced and said goodbye late Monday.

NASA, meanwhile, says it will not have to move the space station out of the way of a piece of space junk that will come within 15 miles Wednesday. It's a fragment from a Chinese satellite that was blasted by a missile two years ago.

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