

Soyuz space capsule lands

By Mara D. Bellaby
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SPACE STATION

Soyuz returns home

A Soyuz space capsule carrying an American, a Russian and a Spaniard, returned home from the International Space Station on Tuesday. The crew landed smoothly and on target in Kazakhstan.

Time remaining until touchdown

Three hours, 20 minutes.
Hooks on the station are opened and the Soyuz separates from the station.

Three hours, 17 minutes.
A short separation burn pushes the Soyuz about 66 feet from the station.

Two hours, 57 minutes
The module carrying the men separates from the unoccupied orbital module, which burns up upon re-entry into the atmosphere.

Two hours, 29 minutes
When the Soyuz is about 12 miles away from the station, the engines fire for a deorbit burn.

23 minutes
Soyuz reaches the entry interface.

13 minutes
Two pilot parachutes are deployed and the drogue chute slows the spacecraft's descent from 514 mph to 179 mph. Another parachute is then released, slowing the Soyuz to a descent rate of 16 mph and giving it the proper angle to descend and expel extra heat.

Two seconds
Engines fire to slow the spacecraft's descent rate from 16 mph to 3 mph at touchdown.

Touchdown
The Soyuz landed near Arkalyk, Kazakhstan.

SOURCE: NASA

Russian engineers had said there was only a slim chance that this crew would suffer from the same computer malfunction that affected the previous flight, but officials took no chances and altered the usual search operation to cover more ground.

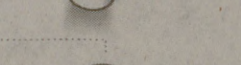
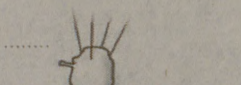
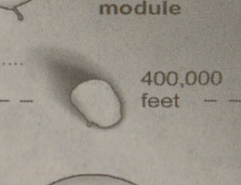
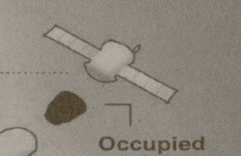
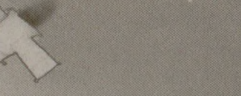
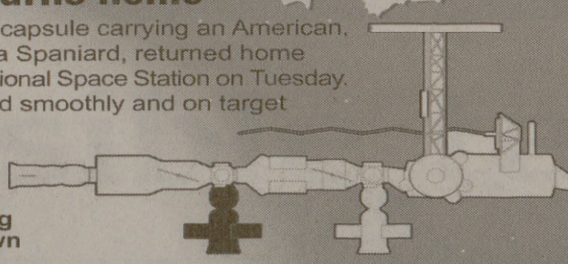
NASA, still getting used to its astronauts landing on foreign ground, also requested a medically equipped U.S. Air Force C-17 to stand by in Astana.

Additionally, this Soyuz was equipped with satellite phones and a global positioning satellite system — courtesy of NASA — so if the crew had landed off-course

and communications systems were damaged as happened in May, they would still have been able to phone in their location.

The three-man crew arrived late Tuesday in Moscow, where Malenchenko's new bride, Texas resident Ekaterina Dmitriev, Lu's fiance and Duque's family awaited them. Malenchenko became the first person to marry in space, holding a wedding by proxy.

Associated Press writer Vladimir Isachenkov contributed to this report from Mission Control outside Moscow.



Continued from Pg. 6

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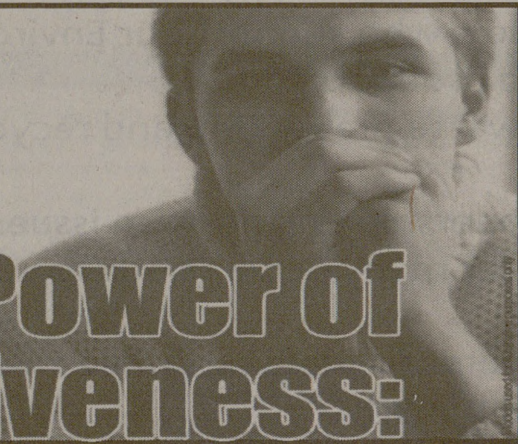
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