

3 Astronauts Return

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A Soyuz space capsule carrying an American astronaut and two Russian cosmonauts landed Saturday morning on the foggy steppes of Kazakhstan, safely returning the three men to Earth after a 144-day mission to the International Space Station.

NASA's Kevin Ford and Russians Oleg Novitsky and Yevgeny Tarelkin had been scheduled to return on Friday, but the landing was postponed by a day because of bad weather.

Live footage on NASA TV showed all three men smiling as they were helped out of the capsule and into reclining chairs to begin their acclimatization to Earth's gravity after nearly five months in space.

Vladimir Popovkin, the head of the Russian space agency, described the crew as "giving off good vibes, that they are a united and friendly team," the Interfax news agency reported. Space officials said Ford would be flown to Houston, Texas, while the Russians would return to the space training facility outside Moscow.

(AP)

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