

July 21: Russians boast end of shuttle opens 'age of reliability'

1. The Russian space agency didn't take long to post a boastful report on their website: "The Beginning of the Epoch of the Soyuzes".
2. It's at <http://www.federalspace.ru/main.php?id=2&nid=17592>
There is as yet no English translation on line.
3. An Interfax news report in English referred to "the epoch of stability starts in the world manned space programs."
4. The website also released a photo of the three cosmonauts on the station with a space shuttle model http://www.federalspace.ru/img/site/maket_1.jpg
Their expressions are not clear. But there are three of them there -- and two Americans.
5. NASA has agreed that from now on, there will always be three Russians on the station to two Americans, and one other partner. So astronauts will remain in the minority on a station financed >80% by the United States. What a deal!
6. The official Russian report was skeptical of any new American manned spacecraft, claiming that "even if an alternative to Russian Soyuz manned spaceships is found in the next few years, it will take a lot of time to prove that the new carrier will provide sufficient safety."
7. One paragraph from the Russian website was not translated by Interfax. Here's my translation: "But really, why are the comfortable and beautiful "birds" departing, and the "old" Russian Soyuz spacecraft, as they are called in the foreign media, remain? The answer is simple - reliability, to say nothing of profitability."
8. So the Russian secrecy over the problems with the new model Soyuz, and their quality-challenged decaying space infrastructure, will get even more restrictive, I guess. And NASA will have to keep cooperating in the coverup.
9. Here are some links related to this theme:
06/15/2010 - MSNBC.com: [How risky is it to rely on Russian spaceflight?](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/37713521/ns/technology_and_science-space/)
http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/37713521/ns/technology_and_science-space/

03/31/2010 - MSNBC.com: [Russians report snag in space safety system Launch escape tower went awry last year; no big deal, NASA was told](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/36119843/ns/technology_and_science-space/)
http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/36119843/ns/technology_and_science-space/

06/2009 - AIAA: [Soyuz Emergency Landings Investigation Lands With A Whimper](http://www.aiaa.org/aerospace/images/articleimages/pdf/Soyuz_JUN2009.pdf)
http://www.aiaa.org/aerospace/images/articleimages/pdf/Soyuz_JUN2009.pdf
10. Didn't take them long to start crowing, did it? What happens next, I wonder?