

Anna Chapman Sees Off Space Crew

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Anna Chapman, left, attending a goodbye ceremony for three astronauts with AP reporter Nataliya Vasilyeva, right. **Dmitry Lovetsky**

BAIKONUR, Kazakhstan — Flame-haired spy Anna Chapman made an unexpected appearance in southern Kazakhstan to wave goodbye to a U.S.-Russian crew that flew into orbit early Friday.

Chapman, who has avoided the public and the press since being deported from the United States in July, appeared at the farewell ceremony for the space crew in Baikonur, a Russia-leased cosmodrome in southern Kazakhstan.

Clad in jeans and a scarlet coat, she told an Associated Press reporter that she had "just arrived" and refused to answer any questions.

She then walked hastily to a guarded guesthouse near the launch pad accompanied by a burly man who blocked her from reporters.

An official with the Federal Space Agency, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Chapman was at Baikonur as an adviser to the president of FondServisBank. The bank — which

incidentally shares the same acronym as the Federal Security Service, FSB — works with space industry companies and was handing out awards, the official said.

After frantic negotiations between spymasters in Moscow and Washington, Chapman was deported by the United States with nine other people in July as part of the biggest spy swap since the Cold War.

Chapman became one of Russia's most notorious spies when photographs she posted on social networking site Facebook were plastered across the front pages of tabloid newspapers around the world.

She posed provocatively for a Russian magazine shoot in August, but had not previously appeared at a public event since she was deported.

A week before her appearance at the rocket launch pad, a trendy Moscow night club invited the media to a party to meet "the head heroine of the spy scandal of the year, the Russian Mata Hari, Anna Chapman." But she did not show.

(AP, Reuters)

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