

Cosmonauts Stumped by Faulty Equipment

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida — A pair of Russian cosmonauts on a spacewalk Thursday ran into equipment trouble while trying to swap an old laser experiment for a new telescope mount at the International Space Station and had to give up.

They were making their second spacewalk in under a week.

Ultimately, Russian Mission Control told Fyodor Yurchikhin and Alexander Misurkin to give up and bring the telescope platform back inside.

"We have different objectives. We cannot spend a lot of time here," one of the cosmonauts said.

The spacewalkers' remaining chore: inspecting six antennas attached to Russia's main space station compartment.

On Monday, an antenna cover came off and floated away. Russian space officials want to know which antenna lost its protective shield. The spacewalkers also needed to check the remaining covers to make sure they were secure.

The U.S. space agency said the flyaway cover posed no risk to the space station.

NASA, meanwhile, has suspended all U.S. spacewalks while the investigation into last month's near-drowning continues. An Italian astronaut's helmet filled with water during a spacewalk on July 16. He barely made it back inside. The water is believed to have originated from the suit's cooling system.

Early in Thursday's spacewalk, Russian Mission Control jokingly blared a few seconds of pop music into the cosmonauts' headsets.

"You want to keep the music on the loop?" Mission Control asked. "Well, if it's possible, yes," one of the spacewalkers replied.

"Are you already that tired of me that you want to listen to music instead of my voice?" Mission Control teased.

The reply from orbit: "Please, we never get tired of you."

The swiveling platform was to hold an optical telescope that will be launched in November and installed by spacewalking cosmonauts.

This was the 173rd spacewalk at the space station, coming up on the 15th anniversary of the launch of its first part. The four other space station residents — two Americans, one Italian and another Russian — watched the spacewalk from inside.

As for the defective spacesuit of Italian astronaut Luca Parmitano, NASA said it would return part or all of the outfit early next year on a commercial SpaceX capsule.

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