

## Spy satellite sent into orbit by space shuttle

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Atlantis' six astronauts launched into more than a week of military observations and medical tests Monday after accomplishing their main task — dispatching a spy satellite to the Pentagon.

"We had a really good deploy. It was great," spaceman James Voss told Mission Control.

Voss released the \$300 million missile-warning satellite early Monday, just six hours into the flight. The blue, gold and white spacecraft floated gracefully from the cargo bay as Atlantis circled the world for the fifth time.

"DSP Liberty's on its way," Voss said.

The crew nicknamed the Defense Support Program satellite "Liberty" in honor of its job for the next five years. DSP satellites in orbit during the Persian Gulf War provided five-minute warnings of Iraqi Scud missile launches.

An attached rocket lifted the satellite to an orbit 22,300 miles above the equator and then separated from the craft. Six thousand infrared sensors continuously staring down at Earth will be able to detect heat from missile exhaust.

The satellite passed its initial checkouts, military officials said. It will take about a month, however, to completely test all systems.

## Atlantis mission schedule



**LAUNCHED**  
Space shuttle Atlantis lifted-off on the 44th space shuttle flight and ninth devoted to the Pentagon at 6:44 p.m. EST Sunday.



**ASTRONAUTS**  
Air Force Col. Frederick Gregory, mission specialist Story Musgrave, Army imagery analyst Thomas Hennen, pilot Air Force Col. Terence "Tom" Henricks, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Mario Runco Jr. and Army Lt. Col. James Voss.



**MISSION**  
Propel a 5,200-pound military satellite 22,300 miles above the equator: conduct medical and radiation-monitoring experiments and use a telescope, cameras and binoculars to observe U.S. military installations.



**DURATION**  
10 days, landing Dec. 4 at Kennedy Space Center.

# White House backs Sununu as job speculation persists

WASHINGTON (AP) — John Sununu's job as President Bush's chief of staff seems safe for now, with even Barbara Bush weighing in Monday with a vote of confidence for him.

"It isn't true and it's ugly and I don't like it," she said of published accounts suggesting she believed Sununu should be replaced.

"He knows it isn't true," she told reporters.

And, while speculation persisted that Sununu might be gone by year's end, the White House made a separate public show on Monday of rallying to his defense.

Spokesman Marlin Fitzwater denied that Sununu's job was in jeopardy, despite criticism from some Bush advisers that he had become a liability at a time when Bush suffers from an image of White House disarray on domestic issues.

"I don't think it's ever been in danger," Fitzwater said of Sununu's tenure.

A day earlier, Bush flashed a thumbs-up sign when asked by reporters whether he intended to keep the former New Hampshire governor. And Sununu was close at Bush's side Monday as the president walked past a phalanx of cameras to his helicopter on the South Lawn of the White House.

Sununu, in fact, did not make the trip to Columbus, Ohio, with Bush and returned to the White House after the short walk with his boss.

— "66 —  
*It isn't true and it's ugly and I don't like it.*

Barbara Bush

Offering a more verbal demonstration of support for Sununu, Mrs. Bush told reporters who had turned out to a White House Christmas tree presentation ceremony that she was appalled at news accounts suggesting she had counseled Sununu's replacement.

"They can't be quoting me," she said.

Newsweek, in this week's issue, said it had learned that Mrs. Bush told friends that she was "disgusted" with Sununu's confrontational style and no longer feels comfortable with him.

The Wall Street Journal reported Friday that the first lady was said to be convinced that Sununu's "flaws

are fatal."

When the conversation turned to Christmas presents, she was asked whether the Bushes plan to give one to Sununu. "If we were giving presents, I'd give him one," she said.

Sununu, who earlier survived a controversy over his use of government transportation, has been the target of attacks recently from many Republican officials for his heavy-handed management style — and for a role in the White House's mixed signals on the economy and domestic issues. Even some Bush Cabinet members have criticized Sununu privately.

The confusion has included White House waffling on the issue of lower credit-card interest rates, last week's about-face on a controversial civil rights directive and Bush's on-again, off-again trip to Asia and Australia.

Sununu has been blamed in some quarters for nearly all Bush's apparent missteps. And some GOP advisers have suggested that Bush dump him as part of a dramatic staff shakeup to reassert control of the administration's domestic agenda.

Bush's standing in public opinion polls has slumped as the economy has failed to bounce back, as he insisted it would, from the recession that began last year.

## Hostage arrives in Texas

Sutherland says he would go back

GRAPEVINE, Texas (AP) — Thomas Sutherland arrived in the United States on Monday after 6 1/2 years as a hostage in Lebanon and said he would go back some day if his family and the government let him.

"Beirut is a different place from what it was," said Sutherland, accompanied by family members after a flight from Germany.

The American University in Beirut, where Sutherland was dean of agriculture when he was abducted June 9, 1985, was shattered by a bomb recently and needs rebuilding. "I would like to be part of that if it's possible," he said.

Sutherland spoke to reporters at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport before going on to Berkeley, Calif., for Thanksgiving at the home of a daughter who is nearly nine months pregnant and couldn't fly.

"It's going to be absolutely wonderful," Sutherland said. "There just isn't enough time in the day to catch up on everything that's happened."

His wife, Jean, said she had no fear about going back to the Middle East, where she felt "very comfortable."

Sutherland said it would be months before he made such a decision, and he would first listen to what his family and the State Department tell him.

Sutherland, 60, and Terry Waite of Britain were released Nov. 18.

Sutherland's captors told him two of the three remaining U.S. hostages would be freed in a few days. American Terry Anderson, the longest-held Western hostage, would be released by the end of the month, Sutherland said.

"They're running a little late," he said. "That's not unusual for that particular organization. I'm still very hopeful."

Sutherland said his captors are "committed to finishing it up once and for all."

After his release, Sutherland spent six days at the U.S. military hospital in Wiesbaden, Germany, where doctors treated him for gastritis and an ulcer. Air Force spokesman Capt. Ray Cornelius said Sunday that Sutherland was in "very good condition."

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