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## Space Station Frequented by Dragons

The northern African nation of Libya provides a spectacular backdrop for another successful unberthing of the SpaceX Dragon capsule from the International Space Station.

This image, taken on May 5, 2018, shows the Canadarm 2 guiding this particular Dragon reusable cargo ship clear of the station for the second time in just over two years. The Falcon 9 first stage booster that lifted the capsule into its 250-mile-high orbit 31 days earlier was also a second-timer, having made the same trip in August of 2017.

The reuse of flight hardware is a logical next step and a major objective for SpaceX and the space transportation industry in general. Imagine what a ticket to Orlando would cost if your airline had to scrap and replace a Boeing 737 after every flight? With the exception of the now-retired Space Shuttle, this once-and-done crew vehicle cycle was standard practice for decades. The tremendous cost of an international mission to Mars, however, will demand a more efficient approach.

