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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Confirms 'Meteor Shower' Was Actually a Missile Defense Satellite

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Youtube

Russia's Aerospace Forces has confirmed that a bright object spotted in the sky over the weekend was a missile defense satellite launched 12 years ago.

Videos on social media published this weekend appeared to show a bright object streaking through the sky over New Zealand.

"Sweet meteor shower over Gisborne just now," a Twitter user based in New Zealand tweeted Saturday.

Embed:

> Sweet meteor shower over Gisborne just now pic.twitter.com/IKifknbxIA

— Jeff ☒ (@peabnuts123) January 5, 2019

The Kosmos-2430 missile early-warning satellite went out of orbit on Saturday, the state-run TASS news agency reported Thursday, citing North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) data.

In a statement to TASS, Russia's Aerospace Forces confirmed the reports and said the satellite has been defunct since 2012.

The Russian military use Kosmos satellites as part of its Soviet-era "Oko" system designed to detect intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launches.

The program was due to be revamped as early as 2015 with a new generation of missile-monitoring "Tundra" satellites and upgraded command centers as part of a so-called "united space system," or EKS.

The name "Kosmos" is a uniform designation intended to conceal the nature of Soviet and Russian satellites from foreign eyes.

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