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Russia Tested Anti-Satellite Missile, U.S. Says

April 16, 2020



U.S. intelligence officials believe that Russia has conducted seven anti-satellite missile tests, the last coming in December 2018. **Ting Shen / Xinhua via ZUMA / TASS**

Russia tested an anti-satellite weapon capable of destroying satellites in low orbit on Wednesday, U.S. Space Force chief Gen. John Raymond said, accusing Moscow of threatening U.S. space assets.

The direct-ascent anti-satellite missile test "provides yet another example that the threats to U.S. and allied space systems are real, serious and growing," he said. In February, Raymond said a pair of Russian satellites had been following an American satellite in an "unusual and disturbing" manner.

Embed:

> Russia's DA-ASAT test, capable of destroying #sats in Low Earth Orbit, is an

> example of growing threats to U.S. & Allied #Space systems. U.S. is ready, committed to #deter aggression & #defend the Nation & our Allies from hostile acts in space. https://t.co/lnazsiv8iU
>
> — Gen. Jay Raymond (@SpaceForceCSO) April 16, 2020

"This test is further proof of Russia's hypocritical advocacy of outer space arms control proposals designed to restrict the capabilities of the United States while clearly having no intention of halting their counterspace weapons programs," Raymond said.

Moscow has not yet commented on the U.S. Space Force's claim.

U.S. intelligence officials believe that Russia has conducted seven anti-satellite missile tests, the last coming in December 2018.

Analysts say Russia's latest anti-satellite weapon launch from the Plesetsk Cosmodrome north of Moscow late Wednesday did not appear to hit any satellites.

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Previous tests by other space powers, including China in 2007 and India in 2019, were said to have added dangerous debris to the cluttered low Earth orbit and pose a danger to other satellites.

U.S. President Donald Trump established the Space Force, an independent military branch under the Air Force, in December.

Trump signed an executive order earlier this month allowing commercial and the extraction of other resources in space. The Kremlin later denounced the idea of space colonization.

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