

Military confirm dying spy satellite hit

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. military used a 10-second window to fire a missile from a U.S. Navy warship and intercept a broken spy satellite about 150 miles above the Earth. Land-, air-, sea- and space-based sensors confirm the non-functioning National Reconnaissance Office satellite, in its final orbits before entering the Earth's atmosphere, was intercepted, the U.S. Defense Department said in a news release. The blast Wednesday night broke the space hardware into pieces, some estimated to be the size of a football, CNN reported Thursday. The missile, fired at about 10:26 p.m. EST Wednesday from the USS Lake Erie, hit the satellite about 150 miles above the Pacific Ocean as it traveled at more than 17,000 mph, the Defense Department said. The USS Decatur and USS Russell were also part of the task force. Officials said the objective was to break open the fuel tank to dissipate the approximately 1,000 pounds of hydrazine, a hazardous fuel, before the satellite entered Earth's atmosphere. Because of the satellite's altitude, debris would begin to re-enter the Earth's atmosphere immediately, the military said. Any remaining debris should re-enter within 40 days.

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