

Russian satellite breaks up over perplexed Mexicans

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A loud explosion and ball of fire that people in central Mexico reported seeing in the sky was actually a Russian satellite plunging back to earth, experts said Thursday.

"We think it was the space wreckage of a Russian satellite that was catalogued by the Department of Defense of the [United States](#) and which we knew could pass over Mexican territory," said Fernando de la Pena, an engineer who is also a chief proponent of establishing a Mexican space agency.

Reports of a large [meteorite](#) reached Mexican media and police on Wednesday from the Hidalgo and Puebla states.

Many said they felt the ground shake with the blast and some reported seeing a huge crater on the ground blown out by the fiery object. But nothing was found after a through search of the area on Thursday.

De la Pena said the space debris was likely the Cosmos 2421 reconnaissance satellite launched by the Russian Navy in June 2006 that malfunctioned and broke apart into 15 pieces two years later.

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