Spiral seen over the Middle East likely Russian missile

June 11 2012, By Nancy Atkinson

Remember the Norway Spiral back in 2009 and the Australian Spiral in 2010? On June 7, 2012 there was another swirling spiral of light, this time see in the skies over the Middle East. People across the region reported seeing a "UFO" and soon videos began showing up on YouTube.

The strange sight has been confirmed to be a Russian ballistic missile test of the Topol ICBM from the Kapustin Yar firing range near Astrakhan in southern Russia.

In several videos from Israel, Syria, Iran and other Middle East, the object started out looking somewhat like a comet and then started spiraling.

But this missile wasn't out of control. Alan Boyle from MSNBC's Cosmic Log talked with space analyst Jim Oberg, who said the Topol's "third-stage spin is a 'feature,' not a malfunction, and may be associated with guidance, or decoy deploy, or enhancing hardness against U.S. boost-phase antimissile weapons."

Oberg also noted a few other "coincidences" of why this particular missile test was seen while other similar tests haven't been viewed. If the Russians were testing the associated warhead's 'penaids' — "penetration aids to frustrate tracking and targeting by U.S. anti-missile systems," this would result in a trajectory that was higher than normal, allowing it to be seen from a greater distance.

Another contributing factor, Oberg said, is “It’s June — near the time of the ‘midnight sun’ in northern latitudes. That means sunlight is streaming over the pole, throughout the night. Something in the northern sky above the atmosphere over Kazakhstan would be backlit by that sunlight.”

Source: Universe Today

Citation: Spiral seen over the Middle East likely Russian missile (2012, June 11) retrieved 16 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2012-06-spiral-middle-east-russian-missile.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.