

R. Nelke
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• Thurs., Nov. 20, 1986

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Soviet Rocket Lights Up Sky

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — A booster rocket from a Soviet satellite that was launched last week lighted up the skies over parts of the West when it reentered the atmosphere and burned, a government spokesman said Tuesday.

Law-enforcement agencies throughout north-central Idaho and southeastern Washington reported a flurry of calls after the burning rocket passed overhead just after 9 p.m. Tuesday.

The North American Aerospace Defense Command at Colorado Springs, Colo., tracked the object as it fell.

Del Kindschi, public affairs officer for NORAD, said, "Reports from the sightings indicated that it was breaking up and burning as it came down."

NORAD's instruments showed the rocket's trajectory swept down from western Canada across Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Colorado, with a final re-entry point over Texas, Kindschi said. The only reports of public sightings NORAD received were from Washington and Idaho, he said.

The booster rocket was believed to have been used to launch Cosmos 1792 last Thursday, Kindschi said.

West