

Scientists Calculate Estimated Damage for Domsday Quake

Eric Gilkey, Editor, Claims Magazine, May 30, 2008

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) recently published a report that analyzed the estimated damage that would occur in Southern California if an earthquake similar in size to the recent event in China took place along the San Andreas Fault .

The hypothetical situation, referred to as the *Shakeout Scenario* , was created by geologists through an analysis of the amount of potential motion on the part of the San Andreas fault with the greatest risk of imminent rupture, a 200-mile long section from the Salton Sea in the Coachella Valley to just south of Gorman.

With this in mind, seismologists and computer scientists modeled the ground shaking. Engineers and building professionals used the models of ground shaking to estimate damage to the built environment. They determined that an earthquake registering a 7.8 on the Richter scale would “kill 1,800 people, injure 50,000, cause \$200 billion in damage, and have long-lasting social and economic consequences.”

The report said that building types known to be vulnerable to damage and collapse would sustain major damage, and all unreinforced masonry buildings within 15 miles of the San Andreas Fault would be completely destroyed. These collapses would contribute to more than \$33

billion in damage to buildings.

For those losses to be paid, building owners must purchase earthquake insurance from a provider.

Perhaps more worrisome, homeowners’ and commercial insurers would also incur significant claims for fire damage. According to the report, fire would double the number of fatalities and significantly contribute to economic losses.

“Around Southern California , there will be 1,600 fires started large enough to warrant a 911 call, and some fires merge into conflagrations that burn hundreds of city blocks,” wrote the 10 authors of the report. “Assuming no Santa Ana winds, the models still indicate a further \$65 billion in direct losses and \$22 billion in indirect losses from the fires.”

The doomsday scenario might seem bleak, but it’s achieving a purpose. Later this year, the report will serve as the scientific framework for the largest earthquake preparedness drill in California history. The drill, called Golden Guardian ’08, will take place on Nov. 13, 2008.

To read the entire 24-page report, which contains additional projections on human casualties and infrastructure damage, [click here](#).



Earthquake prediction is written in the clouds

Paul Simons: Weather Eye , The Times, May 22, 2008

Can clouds predict earthquakes?

The first impression is of a rainbow smeared on to small scraps of clouds, a phenomenon best known in a circumzenithal halo. This is created when sunlight shines through cirrus clouds full of tiny hexagonal ice crystals shaped like plates. The crystals behave like glass prisms, splitting the light into a bow with the colours of the spectrum, often brighter than a rainbow.

But one puzzle is that the colours in the Chinese clouds were upside down from a normal circumzenithal halo – red pointing towards the horizon and blue towards the Sun, instead of the other way round.

Is there a way to predict earthquakes? For centuries people have reported seeing fogs before earthquakes strike, or electrical flashes and strange lights. But reliable earthquake prediction has proved elusive, although one feature of the Earth’s atmosphere offers hope.

Earthquakes are sometimes heralded by changes in the ionosphere, the Earth’s upper atmosphere on the edge of space.



YouTube has [footage of strange multicoloured clouds seen just before the recent earthquake](#) struck Sichuan province in China.