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Elul 6, 5769 / August 26, '09

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Israel Makes Waves by Simulating an Earthquake

by Avraham Zuroff

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(IsraelINN.com) The Seismologic Division of the Ministry of National Infrastructure's Geophysical Institute will attempt to simulate an earthquake in the southern Negev on Thursday. The experiment, financed by the U.S. Defense Department, is a joint project with the University of Hawaii and is part of a scientific project intended to improve seismological and acoustic readings in Israel and its environs, up to a 1,000 km/621 mile radius.

The experiment intends to improve the understanding of sound waves in the atmosphere. Scientists will then be able to fine-tune Israel's seismological equipment to give advance warning of earthquakes. Measurements will also be taken in other countries, including Cyprus, Greece, France, and Germany.

Israel will create a controlled explosion of 80 tons of explosive material, which will simulate the intensity of a tremor after an earthquake of Magnitude 3. Natural earthquakes of a similar intensity occur in the Middle East region about once a week, without the public feeling them.

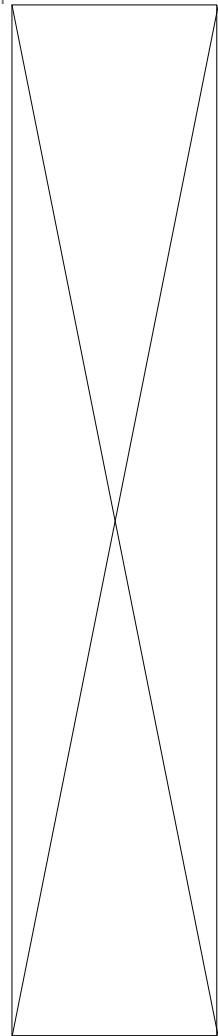
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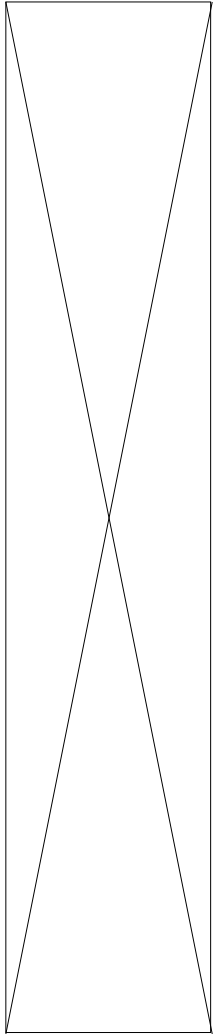
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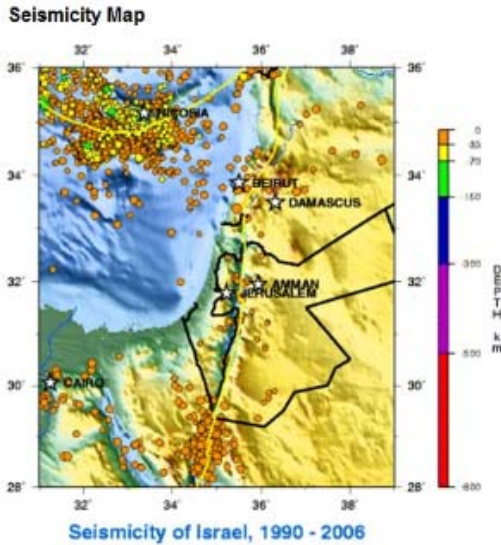
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Courtesy, U.S. Geological Survey



The results from the experiment will be available to the entire scientific community and is expected to make an additional contribution to scientific research of sound waves in the atmosphere and earthquakes.

In the last few years, the Geophysical Institute has created several earthquake simulations in order to calibrate its equipment. In June 2004, the institute detonated 32 tons of explosives in the southern Negev. In June 2005, the institute detonated 20 tons in the Beit Alfa quarries in the Jezreel Valley south of the Galilee. The success of the experiments has significantly contributed to improving the accuracy of identifying earthquakes in Israel.

The Ministry of National Infrastructure and Finance Ministry have recently financed a three-year plan to upgrade Israel's seismological equipment, as part of Israel's earthquake advance warning system.

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