



Crowding the Rim

Overview

The Circum-Pacific Council is joined by American Red Cross, the United States Geological Society and Stanford University to form an international, public-private partnership to address the regional consequences of natural hazards in the Pacific Rim. Nearly two billion people now live within a one day's overland commute to the Pacific Ocean and are vulnerable to the many natural hazards associated with the Rim. In the future, these natural occurring events may well become huge social and economic disasters.

The Crowding the Rim initiative will bring together leading scientists, economists and policymakers to examine the economic and societal risks associated with natural disasters, project changes that will affect them in the future, and begin the search for joint solutions. The initiative will strive to educate communities around the Pacific Rim and to plan strategies for regional risk assessment and mitigation while incorporating new scientific tools.

The need for this new approach to regional risk reduction is clear. Population growth is converging with economic globalization to magnify and extend the disruptive impact of earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tropical storms, and other natural hazards common to the region. In an increasingly interconnected economy, the effects of a natural disaster in one Pacific Nation will almost certainly be felt around the Pacific Rim. The effects of the 1999 Taiwan earthquake on the manufacturing of computer chips and supply shipments to flat screen computer manufacturers dramatically impacted the Korean stock market. Within the same year, Hurricane Mitch, initially threatening Honduras, dismantled economies and infrastructure throughout much of Central America, displacing thousands of people throughout the region.

Regional lifelines for communication, transportation, water and energy resources all are subject to periodic disruptions by natural hazards. Billions of dollars will be invested over the next few years in undersea cables that are vulnerable to earthquakes and landslides. Air cargo traffic is increasing along routes that periodically become choked with volcanic ash. How will the new multi-billion dollar per day global economy weather such disruptions? Understanding the context of a regional framework will allow for more informed decisions by those responsible for life safety and capital distribution.

Initiative Components

The Crowding the Rim initiative includes several components:

- International Summit
- HAZPAC GIS Database
- Teachers Institute and Universal Educational Module
- Post Summit workshops

The primary event will be an international, public-private, cross-disciplinary working summit of approximately 175 participants at Stanford University in August 2001. During the three-day summit, leading scientists, economists, business and industry leaders and emergency management will join with leaders from the Pacific Rim nations to assess environmental and social risks, project changes that will affect them in the future, and plan strategies for risk assessment and mitigation. The program will include introductory papers on the underlying issues, a cross-disciplinary, international game simulation, and a final session devoted to formulating recommendations.



The second major component of the initiative is the development and roll out of a universal educational module for high school students. Spearheaded by the Stanford Program for International Cross-cultural Education (SPICE), this effort includes a pre-summit Teachers Institute for approximately 25 teachers from many of the Rim nations who will participate in a parallel program of their own, learn from the Summit proceedings, and contribute in the development of the module.

The third component is the development of HAZPAC, a geographic information system (GIS) database incorporating Pacific Rim data on geohazards, demographics, infrastructure and economics. HAZPAC will allow users to integrate science into regional decision-making.

Finally, Crowding the Rim will extend the summit results and tools to a broader audience by conducting post-summit workshops around the Pacific Rim, rolling out the educational module internationally and posting HAZPAC on the Internet.

Through these new teaching tools and the establishment of successor workshops in the Rim nations, the partnership hopes to implant a sustainable awareness and concern with the risks that more and more are shared by all whom reside within the Pacific Rim.

In addition to the four primary partners, CTR is supported by sponsoring and endorsing organizations as well as corporate sponsors. Current supporting organizations include the Asia society, Organization of American States, International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics, and the Earthquake Megacities Initiative. Endorsing organizations include the International Geographical Union, International Union of Geological Sciences, American Geological Institute, and American Association of Petroleum Geologists. Corporate sponsors and granting entities include: the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Chevron Corporation and Thales GeoSolutions (Pacific).

For more information, please visit the [Crowding the Rim](#) website.