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A picture taken in 1906, when a large earthquake hit San Francisco. It originated in the San Andreas fault
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Typhoons Apparently Temper Earthquakes

They strike at lower intensities after a large storm

Planetary scientists now believe that nature may be employing earthquake defenses of sorts over a large fault in Taiwan, China, through the power of typhoons. They have learned that the massive storms, which bring about huge amounts of rain and floods, also help release some of the strain that accumulates in the fault lines. However, this happens over hours and days, not seconds or minutes, as it usually does. Because of this mechanism, the area seems to be able to avoid a catastrophic tremor for longer.

The same does not hold true for the San Andreas fault, on the American west coast, where there's nothing standing between the accumulating strain and a devastating tremor. Experts here have long touted science-fiction methods of releasing the tension between the tectonic plates, through the use of buried atomic bombs, or even by injecting large amounts of grease between them. In all fairness, these methods cannot be realized at this time, and their efficiency is arguable, at best.

In the case of Taiwan, the island's Coastal Range, located to the East, is placed under increased tension by the action of the Philippine Sea tectonic plate, which is moving westwards. As they struggle with each other, Taiwan's mountains are pushed upwards, but experts say that the two plates do not slide under one another easily, and that they stick. In geological terms, this means that asperities between them prevent the slide, and that tension accumulates constantly. When the strain becomes too great, the two plates break loose, triggering devastating tremors that release all of the tension, [ScienceNow](#) informs.

At least in theory, that's what should be happening in the region. However, investigations have shown that this is not the case, and that the strain is being constantly released, delaying the inevitable. As far back as 2005, scientists including Institute for Earth Sciences in Taipei Geophysicist Chi-Ching Liu and Carnegie Institution of Washington Department of Terrestrial Magnetism expert Selwyn Sacks, noticed that, when areas of low atmospheric pressure (typhoons) passed over the region, slow earthquakes appeared, sometimes stretching over hours and even days.