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Time ticking away on geologic bombs

United Press International
WASHINGTON — There are hundreds of active, but deceptively quiet volcanoes around the world that represent geologic "time bombs" that can erupt explosively with little warning.

For more than 60 years, geologists have been monitoring some of these volcanoes in order to learn how to predict their eruptions, but the knowledge of just when one will erupt still eludes them.

The recent eruption of Mount Soufriere on the Caribbean island of St. Vincent points up the continuing mystery of predicting eruptions, and illustrates the vulnerability of people who live near active volcanoes.

Scientists in several countries are working on the problem, but Dr. Robert Tilling, who has directed much of the United States Geological Survey's study of volcanoes, says they still need more time.

"For most volcanoes, the only information we have is from historical times, which is really very short. Geologists are more used to dealing in millions or hundreds of millions of years," Tilling said in an interview.

Tilling classifies volcanoes into two types: explosive volcanoes, such as Mount Soufriere, which are more destructive, raining lava and ash on nearby areas; and on-explosive volcanoes such as those in Hawaii which are characterized more by steady lava flows that can slowly engulf nearby towns and farms.

Tilling says about two-thirds to three quarters of the world's approx-

imately 500 active volcanoes are explosive. Unfortunately, their eruptions are the hardest to predict.

"We consider a volcano active," Tilling said, "when it has erupted within recorded history. Most of the world's volcanoes are dormant, and thus are deceptively quiet. They are dangerous because they are like geologic time bombs that can erupt with very little warning."

He said probably the most disastrous volcanic eruption in terms of human losses was the 1883 explosion of the volcanic island of Krakatoa in the Straits of Sunda between Sumatra and Java.

A series of four gigantic explosions produced five cubic miles of rock, debris and ash and the collapse of the volcanic mountain top created a great sea wave that swept over the heavily populated coastline of Java, killing about 36,000 people.

Scientists have a basic understanding of the causes of volcanism. Most volcanoes occur where continent-sized sections of the Earth's crust several hundred kilometers thick meet. Their collisions create weaknesses in the Earth's crust, permitting molten rock, or magma, to well up to the surface.

Other volcanoes, such as those in Hawaii, occur when a plate passes over a deep "hot spot" which melts some of the rock and allows magma to reach the surface, "like drawing paraffin over a candle," Tilling said.

Most volcanoes are in the "Ring of Fire" which encircles the Pacific Ocean, running from South America to the Aleutians to Japan and down to New Zealand.

Other major areas of volcanism are the Mediterranean Sea, the West Indies and Iceland.

In Hawaii, where geologists have maintained monitoring stations since 1912, there has been limited success in predicting eruptions. But Tilling said scientists have often been fooled when signs indicated an imminent eruption but none occurred and that "reliable and specific prediction capability for eruptions in Hawaii still eludes the scientists."

Players enjoy losing new space war game

United Press International
CHICAGO — In a cool, dark bar a man sits transfixed in front of a pulsating, electronic screen, battling a machine in a fight he knows he can't win.

Nobody likes to be a loser, but when playing "Space Invaders," most gamblers don't seem to mind.

Space Invaders, an electronic game from Japan which first hit the United States in November, has sparked the attention and

Jarocki said production of Space Invaders could eventually double or even quadruple that of other popular electronic games.

addition of thousands of Americans. Distributors say it promises to be the hottest electronic game ever introduced to the coin industry.

"We've distributed many thousands, well beyond 20,000 of the machines," said Stan Jarocki, marketing director for Chicago's Midway Manufacturing Corp., U.S. distributor of the game. "It's been popular for 10 months and it looks like it's going to continue that way for another 10 months."

Jarocki said production of Space Invaders could eventually double or even quadruple that of other popular electronic games.

In Japan, pinball parlors are in fierce competition with Space Invaders parlors. Students cut

classes to play during the day, businessmen drop by game rooms on their way home, bar hostesses patronize them in the early morning hours. The craze has snowballed into Space Invader T-shirts, potato chips, even a player-rated Space Invaders Club.

In the United States, pinball parlor operators have started putting as many as five of the machines in a single game room — a revolutionary idea considering parlors try to offer as many different games as possible. The game also is very popular in Europe and is doing well in Canada, Jarocki said.

Space Invaders, played on a television-like screen, is based on the "kill or be killed" principle — Star Wars style.

Slip in a quarter and 55 invaders from outer space appear in rows of 11, firing laser beams at the player's single cannon and moving in a pack toward him. The player gets three chances to

"The game seems to be gaining player appeal as it goes on. It's phenomenal. People don't want to leave it once they get started. But you can't beat the game."

dodge the fire by moving his weapon from side-to-side, hiding behind four barricades and "shooting to kill" the invaders above.

Once a screen of invaders is

destroyed, another 55 appear and start their attack one row closer to the player than the predecessors.

Points are racked up for every invader destroyed. Most beginners hit around the 400 mark, Jarocki said the highest recorded he knew of were 45,000 in the United States and 300,000 in Japan.

"The game has great retaining power," Jarocki said. "Many games are played on a time basis but with this particular game the player keeps on playing as long as he is not wiped out by the invaders."

"The game seems to be gaining player appeal as it goes on. It's phenomenal. People don't want to leave it once they get started. But you can't beat the game."

The game is "unbeatable" no matter how great a player's skill the machine challenges him with more space invaders. And the better he is, the faster they attack.

Part of the game's fascination may be its intricate detail and pulsating sound — beeps and whines which quicken and heighten as invaders approach their target.

"I walked into a crowded bar one night and didn't even have to ask whether or not they had a Space Invader machine," said Kent McDill, a Chicagoan who spent at least \$60 on the game in six months.

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Americans forced to leave France as problems keep getting worse

United Press International
PARIS — Americans in Paris are going home.

"Gay Paree" attracted so many American expatriates for such long-term stays that their community included pillars of the literary and art world, their own schools, hospital and even an American Legion post. Now they are becoming an endangered species in France.

The weakened dollar, inflation, taxes, tougher French policies on students and job seekers and a changed cultural environment have all taken their toll.

Last year the number of U. S. res-

idents registered with the French government dropped more than 7 percent to about 26,000.

Some see signs that this was the first step in a major exodus of Americans.

"What is clear is that the American community has changed," says one long-time resident. "It's not what it used to be. Do you see the Hemingways coming here any more to get started under the eye of a Gertrude Stein or Ezra Pound? You don't."

For years, until well after World War II, Paris meant the good life at relatively low cost.

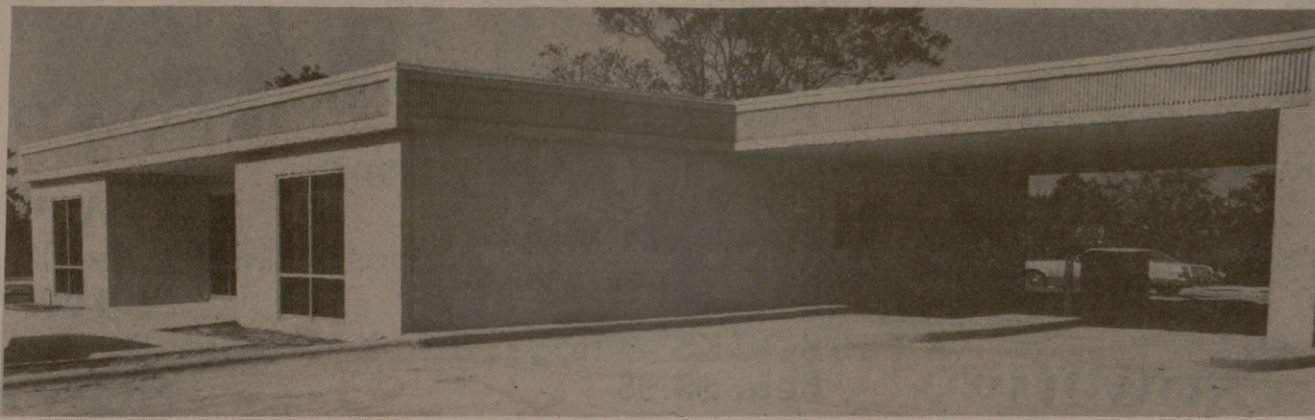
"Now there's been inflation 10 percent or more for the last years," says American lawyer Fredenberg. "It's gotten too expensive."

Living costs are 50 percent higher than many U.S. cities. There's considerable boost last year American income tax rates for those overseas. That, plus the Medicare benefits abroad, decided significant number of Americans in France to pack up and go home.

Now a new law that makes investment income in the United States liable to French taxation added to uncertainty and jitters the American community, which has had a special place in France since Benjamin Franklin, the first U.S. ambassador.

Americans in Paris built churches of their own, a school, a college, clubs and civic organizations. There is even an American chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous. But as the base of the established residents — American-staffed corporate offices — on whom they depend for their lives they are finding it tough to sur-

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