

USGS examines earthquake triggers

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WASHINGTON -- Earthquakes far from the San Andreas Fault in California could trigger accelerated slips along the fault line, researchers said.

Researchers at the U.S. Geological Survey and the Georgia Institute of Technology in a study published in the journal Nature Geoscience said they found evidence that suggested distant earthquakes can trigger tremor activity along the length of another fault.

"The scientists hypothesize that distant earthquakes can act as a trigger for ongoing episodic creep events, sometimes altering their timing," the USGS said in a statement on its Web site.

The USGS said Tuesday it recorded a 6.8-magnitude earthquake centered near the Loyalty Islands in the Pacific Ocean. There was no tsunami warning issued for the quake.

A 9-magnitude quake struck Japan in March, sending a massive tsunami racing across the Pacific Ocean.

The USGS recorded 21 earthquakes across the globe Monday, ranging from a 3.9-magnitude quake in western Texas to a 5.4-magnitude quake near the coast of Nicaragua.