



**TSR CONSORTIUM ANNOUNCES FORECAST
FOR JAPAN TYPHOON STRIKES IN 2001**

Pacific typhoon and intense typhoon activity and the numbers of typhoons striking Japanese shores are expected to be near to average in 2001, a team of UK scientists announced today.

Dr Paul Rockett, Dr Mark Saunders and Dr Tony Hamilton of the Benfield Greig Hazard Research Centre at University College London (UCL) have developed - in collaboration with the Met Office - innovative long-range forecasts for tropical cyclone activity around the world. These forecasts are central to a new venture called *TropicalStormRisk.com (TSR)* which commenced in December 2000.

The TSR forecast is the longest range prediction yet for Japanese typhoon strikes- issued 4 months ahead of the main Pacific typhoon season (which spans the period from 1st June through to the 31st December 2001). Its timing is designed to benefit insurers and reinsurers being two months prior to the insurance industry's major renewal season for Asia.

Using a similar model the team accurately predicted in May 2000 that the activity of the 2000 NW Pacific tropical cyclone season would be slightly below average. TSR called for 25 tropical storms, 14 typhoons, 7 intense typhoons, and 2 typhoons striking Japan. All of these predictions proved correct. Their further prediction of 3 tropical storms making Japan landfall was only 1 in error.

For 2001, TSR are forecasting 7 intense typhoons, 16 typhoons and 28 tropical storms, with 3 and of these systems striking Japan as typhoons and 4 as tropical storms.

The TSR forecasts are prepared using advanced statistical methods and historical climate data back to 1950. The model exploits the long-range predictability of tropical Pacific sea surface temperatures and atmospheric winds. The team's expectation for continuing weak La Niña conditions through until at least September 2001 is responsible for the forecast of another relatively quiet typhoon season.

Typhoons rank as the most costly and deadly natural disaster affecting much of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and coastal areas in other southeast Asian countries. Skilful long-range forecasts of seasonal tropical cyclone strikes can benefit society, business and government by reducing through the available lead-time - the risk, uncertainty and financial volatility inherent to varying active and inactive storm seasons.

For further information, please contact:

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

Forecast Numbers:

| | Japan Landfalling 2001 | | NW Pacific Total Numbers 2001 | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| | Typhoons | Tropical Storms | Intense Typhoons | Typhoons | Tropical Storms |
| Ave. no. 1971-2000 | 2.5 | 4.1 | 8.2 | 17.0 | 27.2 |
| Actual no. 2000 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 14 | 25 |
| Forecast no. 2001 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 16 | 28 |
| Key: | IntenseTyphoon | = Sustained Wind > 95 Knots | = | Hurricane Category 3 to 5 | |
| | Typhoon | = Sustained Wind > 63 Knots | = | Hurricane Category 1 to 5 | |
| | Tropical Storm | = Sustained Wind > 33 Knots | | | |

The full 2001 forecast and the verification of the *TSR's* 2000 NW Pacific typhoon forecast may be viewed as PDF documents at the *TropicalStormRisk.com* web site: <http://www.TropicalStormRisk.com>

TropicalStormRisk.com (TSR) is a venture which has developed from the UK government-supported TSU-NAMI initiative project on seasonal tropical cyclone prediction. The *TSR* consortium comprises leading UK insurance industry experts and scientists at the forefront of seasonal forecasting. The *TSR* insurance expertise is drawn from the Royal and Sun Alliance insurance company, Benfield Greig, a leading independent global reinsurance and risk advisory group, and from the CGNU Insurance Group. The *TSR* scientific grouping brings together climate physicists, meteorologists and statisticians at UCL (University College London) and the Met Office.