

Scientists watching asteroid's path

May 19 2006

U.S. scientists are keeping an eye on a 1,000-foot-wide asteroid that could hit Earth 30 years from now with a force to destroy a small state.

NASA scientists have fixed Sunday, April 13, 2036, as the likely date when Apophis could smash into Earth, reports The Chicago Tribune. Such an event could wreak destruction bigger than brought about by Hurricane Katrina, the 2004 Asian tsunami and the 1906 San Francisco earthquake combined, says the report.

It says the odds of such a strike are 1-in-6,250, but that's too high in astronomers' parlance. The space agency is spending millions for gauging the threat posed by Apophis and other asteroids.

"Certainly we had a major credibility problem at the beginning -- a giggle factor," David Morrison, a NASA scientist, told the newspaper. "Now, many people are aware this is something we can actually deal with, mitigate and defend against."

The U.S. Congress has asked the space agency to develop options to deflect potential threats that may include use of lasers on the moon and even nuclear weapons, the report said.

Copyright 2006 by United Press International

Citation: Scientists watching asteroid's path (2006, May 19) retrieved 17 July 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2006-05-scientists-asteroid-path.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.