

The New York Times |**EUROPE**

Earthquake Shakes Southern Greece

By ANTHEE CARASSAVA FEB. 15, 2008

ATHENS — A powerful earthquake measuring 6.5 on the Richter scale shook southern Greece on Thursday, sending panic-stricken residents into the streets but causing no major damage or casualties.

Authorities in Athens said the earthquake, which rattled the eastern Mediterranean, originated 140 miles southwest of Athens, about 19 miles off the coast and about 18 miles beneath the seabed. It struck shortly after midday local time and lasted for about 15 seconds.

“It was nightmarish,” said Thodoris Salandis, mayor of Koroni, a seaside city near the earthquake’s epicenter. “We all rushed out of our offices and houses,” he told the state-run NET television network.

A second earthquake, measuring 6.4 on the Richter scale, struck two hours after the first shock.

The United States Geological Survey initially measured the first quake’s magnitude at 7.3 but later revised it to 6.7. No tsunami warnings were issued. After the first earthquake, experts had been forecasting follow-up aftershocks and warned people in the region to stay outside. After the second shock, they said there would

6

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A strong underwater earthquake rattled the same region last month but caused no injuries or damages.

Riddled with fault lines, Greece is one of the most earthquake-prone countries in Europe. The last serious tremor killed more than 100 people in September 1999.

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6

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