

Katrina; relocation or ethnic cleansing?

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FEMA has been entirely reshaped under the Bush Administration. It's no longer designed to meet the needs of a natural disaster but, rather, to advance the political agenda of the current regime. This is clear by the way that FEMA employees did everything in their power to undermine relief operations for the people stranded by Hurricane Katrina. Their orders simply corresponded with Washington's intention to put the city under federal control and to forcefully-evacuate the victims to locations around the Southwest.

Most of us have already heard the damning accusations of Aaron Broussard, president of Jefferson Parish, LA, who said on Meet the Press that FEMA had cut off supplies of water, food and fuel to hurricane victims, as well as, cutting "all of our emergency communications lines."

Since, Broussard's nationally broadcast testimonial, there's been a torrent of charges leveled at FEMA. The National Guard was prevented from attending to the sick and wounded, desperately needed busses were unexplainably returned to Baton Rouge, assistance was rejected from Chicago and other cities, helicopter rescue teams were reprimanded for rescuing people trapped on their roofs, and checkpoints were set up to prevent poor, black people from leaving the city.

Information clearinghouse has put together an impressive list of articles that detail the FEMA obstructions.

FEMA won't accept Amtrak's help in evacuations
<http://news.ft.com/cms/s/84aa35cc-1da8-11da-b40b-00000e>

FEMA turns away experienced firefighters
<http://www.dailykos.com/storyonly/2005/9/5/105538/7048>

FEMA turns back Wal-Mart supply trucks
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/05/national/nationalspec>

FEMA prevents Coast Guard from delivering diesel fuel
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/05/national/nationalspec>

FEMA won't let Red Cross deliver food <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/05246/565143.stm>

FEMA bars morticians from entering New Orleans
<http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=15147862&BRD=>

FEMA blocks 500-boat citizen flotilla from delivering aid

<http://www.dailykos.com/storyonly/2005/9/3/171718/0826>

FEMA fails to utilize Navy ship with 600-bed hospital on board
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-0509>

FEMA to Chicago: Send just one truck
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-050902dale>

FEMA turns away generators <http://www.wvlv.com/local/stories/WVLBLOG.ac3fcea.htm>

These articles will help to convince the reader that blocking of aid to hurricane victims was not a “failure of leadership” or “bureaucratic bungling” as the media has suggested, but was the intentional policy of the Bush administration. The administration was executing a strategy to annex local police and National Guard and put them under direct federal authority. The plan was temporarily subverted when both the Mayor and the Governor refused to relinquish their power. The White House then threatened to take-over regardless; invoking little-known presidential orders that allow sweeping executive powers in a national emergency.

Currently there are executive orders on the books that permit the president to seize all modes of transportation, control the media, take over all energy sources, control all aircraft and airports, relocate entire communities and operate penal and correctional facilities in the event of a national emergency.

Under the provisions of Executive Order 11921 “It also provides that when a state of emergency is declared by the President, Congress cannot review the action for 6 months...General Frank Salzedo, chief of FEMA’s Civil Security Division said in 1983 conference that he saw FEMA’s role as ‘a new frontier in the protection of individual and governmental leaders from assassination, and from civil and military installations from sabotage and attack, AS WELL AS PREVENTION OF DISSIDENT GROUPS FROM GAINING ACCESS TO US OPINION OR A GLOBAL AUDIENCE IN TIMES OF CRISIS.’ “(Friends of Liberty.com)

FEMA’s role has changed from one of public assistance in a natural catastrophe to defense of the political establishment and its economic-military power base. New Orleans represents a fundamental transformation in the way the administration plans to conduct domestic affairs. The democratic model has been abandoned for a top-down managerial-style with all the familiar trappings of a dictatorship. The results are plain to see; the city is now under martial law with armored vehicles and 70,000 military personnel on 24 hour patrol. At present, the last occupants of the poorer areas are being forcefully-removed from their homes and evacuated while legally-registered firearms are being confiscated by police.

The city remains under strict “shoot to kill” orders aimed at anyone either looting or out-of-doors beyond the 6 o’clock curfew. Although white, middle-class Americans seem to be in denial over what has taken place in New Orleans; many black Americans seem to fully grasp its meaning. Glen Ford of “Black Commentator” notes that “Displacement based on race is a form of genocide, as recognized under the Geneva Conventions. Destruction of a people’s culture, by official action, or depraved inaction, is an offense against humanity, under international law.”

Ford recognizes that what transpired in New Orleans is just the latest manifestation of

ethnic cleansing papered-over by the diversionary braying of the media. There was no “bureaucratic bungling” or “failure of leadership” in New Orleans. It was a perfectly choreographed strategy to purge the city of poor blacks and to pave the way for lavish reconstruction projects for the wealthy constituents of the Bush administration.

Now, as Glenn Ford says, “the right to return” for the people of New Orleans will be blocked by “facts on the ground” that will preclude any future homecoming. It’s likely that the measly \$2000 stipend that Bush has offered the relocated residents will be the only reparation they see from Washington.

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