

The Unconstitutional FEMA

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It's a good thing President George Bush doesn't read newspapers or watch TV. If he did, even he could see that people from one end of this nation to the other are rapidly reaching zero tolerance with his bumbling ineptitude each time he is faced with a crisis. Those who watched in amazement as Bush sat paralyzed in a Florida elementary school on the morning of September 11, 2001 as planes were ramming into the World Trade Center and Pentagon - who watched in dismay as he zigzagged across the country from one hidey hole to another throughout the day - were not surprised that he dropped the ball when Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast on August 29.

Bush has dropped every ball thrown to him throughout his life. But he's a hell of a cheerleader. It's almost like being back in college. In an instant, Bush can whip a crowd into a frenzy, armed with nothing but a bullhorn and a shell-shocked firefighter. He can divert the attention of an entire nation from what is happening on the field by locking it into one massive, cheering "wave." Life is a game. Go Team.

However, Operation Hurricane Katrina is vastly different from Bush's "freedom is on the march" game that continues to wreak chaos, death and destruction throughout the Arab world. In the aftermath of Katrina, the homeless, bewildered, abandoned and starving citizens may be poverty-stricken, they may be dark-skinned, but they are Americans. And, because they are Americans, the cheering has stopped. The media, led by the shaking outrage of CNN's Anderson Cooper and right-leaning curmudgeon Jack Cafferty, followed by the networks and, finally, by the wondrous on-air meltdown of Fox News' Shepard Smith, at long last is doing its job. For a time, however fleeting, the media has been shocked into telling the truth, asking the right questions and holding the administration's feet to the fire.

Thanks to the media, Bush is out there without a bullhorn - and without a game plan.

The best-laid plans

Of course the [neoconservatives](#) who are in control of this country had a plan for Iraq. I've written about it so often I'm almost embarrassed to bring it up again. In 1992, Dick Cheney, Lewis Libby and Paul Wolfowitz laid out their obsession for world dominance in a secret document, [Defense Planning Guidance](#) wherein they boldly asserted, "our overall objective is to remain the predominant outside power in the region (Middle East and SW Asia) and preserve U.S. and Western access to the region's oil."

Although such arrogance caused a furor when released to the media, the war jackals merely retreated into their lair and continued to hone the policy of preemptive war to seize control of the world's resources. That was the plan then, it was the plan in 1997 when they established the warmongering think-tank, [Project for a New American Century](#), it was the

plan outlined in the September 2000 [Rebuilding America's Defenses](#), which included another bold assertion – to achieve their goal they would need “a catastrophic and catalyzing event, like a new Pearl Harbor” – and it remains the plan today.

It was a stroke of genius in 2000 to rig the election and put George Bush in the Cheerleader in Chief role. Bush is mean-spirited, vindictive, greedy, incapable of feeling empathy, easily manipulated, desperate for attention – even adulation – and has no qualms with playing the God card for political gain. Americans are a forgiving people, and most accepted without question this worthless, former booze-and-drug sodden ne'er-do-well's claim that he was born again – a man of God. They loved him. All Cheney had to do was select himself as Number Two, slip behind the curtain, and the cabal – as they like to call themselves – was open for business, and waiting for a new Pearl Harbor.

It was not long in coming. If 9-11 taught us nothing else, we must ultimately concede that George Bush entered office on his way to war with Iraq, and had no qualms about [lying repeatedly to the American people](#) and to our allies to get there. Piles of dead bodies, including nearly 2,100 coalition soldiers and marines and tens of thousands of Iraqis, the majority of whom are women and children, are but a minor irritant to Bush. That part of humanity not belonging to the corporate world is invisible to Bush, nothing more than collateral damage, and is not factored into his “war plan.”

Long before the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, just as before 9-11, administration officials were warned of impending peril. Although they played out the frightening scenario in rehearsal after rehearsal, when it was “show time” they were nowhere to be found. They knew. And they did nothing. Either by incompetence or design, they failed to act, and the death, crippling despair, disease and sheer hopelessness suffered by Americans in our most romantic city is breathtaking in scope and indefensible on any level.

Bush has repeatedly slashed funds for the Army Corps of Engineers water projects for New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. In 2003, the money that had previously flowed into the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Control Project (SELA), tasked with shoring up levees and building pumping stations, dried up to a mere trickle. With warnings ringing in his ears, in 2004 Bush refused the money requested to raise the levees and rejected a plea for a \$15-million project to shore up the banks of Lake Pontchartrain. And, in June, Bush's 2006 federal budget called for slashing SELA funds from an already inadequate \$36.5-million to a mere \$10.4-million, and for cutting the overall New Orleans Corps of Engineers budget a record \$71.2-million, which Corps officials say is the largest single-year funding loss ever.

But all is not lost. The Corps of Engineers managed to get a hefty \$100-million for just one water project – in the Kurdish area of northern Iraq. According to the peerless Ward Harkavy, who writes [The Morning Report](#) for the *Village Voice*, “On August 15, just two weeks before Katrina slammed into the U.S., the Pentagon boasted of spending \$6.4-billion – so far – on 2,705 Corps of Engineers construction projects in Iraq, all but 200 of them started since June 2004.”

The SNAFU plan

It looks to me like everything is going according to plan. Chaos, like everything else, is just a matter of perspective. Few people really know anything about the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), except it's a name that's thrown around a lot during times of

national disaster. Do not think for one minute that Bush “gutted” FEMA by placing it under the control of Homeland Security czar Michael Chertoff. By any other name, FEMA remains this nation’s “secret government,” with powers to suspend laws, move entire populations, arrest and detain citizens without a warrant, hold citizens without a trial, seize control of all transportation and communication systems and – suspend the US Constitution.

FEMA was created outside of Constitutional law via a President John Kennedy [Executive Order](#), and is subject to no Congressional oversight. It received a “[tune up](#)” under President Jimmy Carter then, like Topsy, “just grewed” through presidents Nixon, Reagan, Poppy and Bubba to the present time. Genocide fascists like Henry Kissinger, and greedy patriots like former General Richard Secord and Lt. Col. Oliver North, the architects of both the Iran-Contra scandal and today’s FEMA, must be laughing their asses off at the juvenile disinformation bait-and-switch scenario playing itself out in the US media.

We would do well to remember that these jackals are on a mission. No matter how many times they are exposed as liars and deceivers, they continue across the field of life like a hoard of grasshoppers, leaving stripped and broken humanity in their wake. They are roiling the waters of the Mississippi by portraying FEMA as dim-witted, absent-minded, rudderless.

And it’s working. The media, Internet, Congress, you, me – everybody – all baying for Bush to dump the hapless FEMA director, Michael Brown, a Bush crony and former counsel for the International Arabian Horse Association. We are all outraged, not at Bush for dropping the ball; for being so chillingly disconnected from those he is charged to protect – but at Brown, who is a perfect lightning rod and, if need be, a fall guy.

He’s also a man with a plan.

Take a look at these headlines – FEMA refusing all offered rescue assistance from Amtrack to experienced firefighters, FEMA not delivering on promises, FEMA barring delivery of desperately needed food or water to frightened and bewildered victims of Katrina, FEMA telling First Responders not to “respond” to the disaster. Does anybody but me see a pattern here? Is it possible for an emergency aid organization to show up at the scene only to refuse all offers of aid? Does McDonald’s cook up a bunch of hamburgers and then lock its doors to its hungry patrons?

FEMA is the Patriot Act on crack. Once its powers are unleashed, Oliver North’s [REX 84 “exercise”](#) will become a reality. The Constitution will be suspended and FEMA will have the right to detain or seize the property of anyone even suspected of engaging in, or who might be thinking of conspiring with others to engage in acts of espionage or sabotage. REX 84 also advocated rounding up and transferring to “assembly centers or relocation camps” of at least *21 million American Negroes* in the event of massive rioting or disorder, not unlike the rounding up of the Jews in Nazi Germany in the 1930s.

The actual number of displaced New Orleans residents is unknown. Overnight, they became “refugees,” and hundreds of thousands packed into the Super Dome or sat sweltering in the sun on roads and bridges during a nightmarish week of waiting for help that did not come, while political fat cats finger-pointed and accused each other of playing the “blame” game. Finally, their military liberators herded them onto buses and planes, refusing to reveal their destination – husbands and wives separated, families split apart – and disappeared to “assembly centers or location camps” throughout the United States.

Bush, who once asked *Sojourners'* Reverend Jim Wallis how to talk to poor people because he had never been around one, has once again dropped the ball. Telling Americans whose homes, jobs, loved ones, whose whole lives were washed away in a single night to "hang in there, and don't buy gasoline if you can't afford it," before cutting out to a birthday party in Arizona falls a bit short of his presidential promise to "protect the American people."

It's unfortunate that it took a tragedy like Katrina for middle- and lower-class America to finally come to grips with where they will fit into the capitalist White supremacist New World Disorder. Americans now know that Bush is incapable of leading. They know he's too arrogant and stubborn to follow. They know it's time for him to get out of the way - before more of us are trampled, displaced, abandoned, and destroyed, not only here but throughout the world.

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